THE THEORY OF Agreeable Senſations.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE THEORY OF Theorie K Agreeable Senſations.

IN WHICH,

After the Laws obſerved by Nature in the Diſtribution of Pleaſure are diſcovered, the Principles of Natural Theology, and Moral Philoſophy, are eſtabliſhed.

To which is ſubjoined, relative to the ſame Subject, *A Diſſertation on Harmony of* STYLE.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH.

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PREFACE

BY

Mr VERNET, Author of the Treatiſe on the Truth of the *Chriſtian Religion.*

THE *firſt ſketch of this work was no more than a letter to my Lord* Bolin———, *which was publiſhed without the author's knowledge, in a collection of ſelect pieces printed at* Paris *in* 1736. *Some time after, a man of letters,*

letters, who, for his amuſement, had a ſmall printing-houſe at his country-ſeat, thought proper to oblige his friends with an elegant edition of this ſmall work in octavo. Upon this the author, who looked upon it at as a rude and imperfect draught, never intended to ſee the light, was ſolicited to explain and enlarge his thoughts. This he has done in the theory with which we now preſent the world. The deſign of it is, to diſcover the ſource and genuine ſtandard of our ſeveral inclinations, pleaſures, and duties, by which means we obtain, as it were, the key to the whole ſyſtem of humanity and morals. God having endowed man with ſeveral faculties, as well corporeal as intellectual, in order to promote his happineſs, alſo vouchſafed to conduct him to this noble end,

not only by the deductions of reaſon, but alſo by the force of inſtinct and ſenſation, a ſtill more efficacious principle. Thus nature, by a ſenſation of pain, inſtantaneouſly appriſes us of what might prove hurtful to us; and on the contrary, by an agreeable ſenſation, gently leads us to whatever may tend to the preſervation of our beings, and the perfection or good ſtate of our faculties, which are the two points on which our happineſs depends. Theſe things have already been obſerved by ſeveral modern philoſophers, but our author not ſatisfied with this, traces and particulariſes theſe obſervations in the following manner. Our faculties can neither be of uſe, nor diſplay themſelves, farther than we exerciſe them; motion or action is therefore ſo neceſſary

to us, that without it we muſt inevitably ſink into a deplorable ſtate of inſenſibility and languor. On the other hand, as we are weak and limited creatures, all exceſſive and violent action would impair and deſtroy our organs; we muſt therefore only uſe a moderate motion or exerciſe, ſince, by this means, the uſe or perfection of our faculties is reconciled with our firſt intereſt, which is that of ſelf-preſervation. Now 'tis to this happy medium, I mean to a moderate exerciſe of our faculties, that the author of our nature has ſo wiſely annexed pleaſure.

Our author having eſtabliſhed this principle, conſiders the various pleaſures of the ſenſes, thoſe of the underſtanding, and thoſe of the heart.

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He alſo diſtinctly accounts for every thing that is eſteemed beautiful and agreeable in the works of nature and art, in countenances, in colours, in ſounds, in the figure, proportion, ſymmetry, variety, and novelty of objects, in the taſtes of every age, in language and ſtyle, in the ſciences, in the paſſions, in the motions of the ſoul, and, in a word, in every thing which is of a moral and phyſical nature, or which is conducive to the real advantage of man.

By theſe ſteps we eaſily aſcend to a firſt intelligent and beneficent cauſe, who has eſtabliſhed this beautiful harmony, and given us preciſely that degree of ſenſibility, which, conſidering every thing, was beſt ſuited to our wants and neceſſities, whatever

has been advanced to the contrary by Mr Bayle, *whoſe ſyſtem is here refuted.*

Our philoſopher, always animated by the nobleſt and moſt worthy views, makes it his particular buſineſs to ſhew, that man finds his happineſs in the practice of the ſeveral duties he owes to God, his neighbour, and himſelf. Not content to ſtop here, he, by reaſoning on the goods and evils annexed to every condition, ſhews the pre-eminence of intellectual goods, and the advantages which every one may reap from a proper uſe of his faculties, in order to render life agreeable, and contribute to the public good, by an uninterrupted ſeries of rational occupations.

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This ſhort analyſis is ſufficient to convince the reader, that the preſent work contains the true principles of natural theology, of morality, of eloquence, and of taſte, both with reſpect to the liberal arts and works of genius and wit. He will here, in a particular manner, learn the principal end of wiſdom, the great art of rendering ourſelves as happy as the frailty of our preſent condition will ſuffer us to be.

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THEORY

OF

Agreeable Senſations.

CHAP. I.

There is a ſcience of ſenſations as certain, and more important, than any other ſcience in nature.

HERE have been philoſophers, who by their obſervations have learned from nature ſome of thoſe rules which ſhe has preſcribed to herſelf in the diſtribution of motion; and the ex-

plication of theſe laws forms a ſcience, accompanied with the ſame evidence as geometry. Can what paſſes in bodies be an object adapted to the knowledge of the human mind? and can thick darkneſs conceal from it thoſe changes to which it finds itſelf ſubjected? 'Tis true, indeed, the different degrees of motion may be expreſſed by numbers, and they furniſh matter for geometrical calculations: but tho' our ſenſations will not admit of an exact meaſure, yet ſurely we diſcern them too clearly, not to be able to trace what gave riſe to them, to perceive what accompanies them, and to foreſee the conſequences which will follow. In the theory of motion, with a compaſs in our hand, if I may uſe the expreſſion,

expreſſion, we travel thro' the immenſity of ſpace and time; but in the more confined circle of our inquiry into ſenſations, we muſt not expect the road will be pointed out ſo plainly; nevertheleſs it will be equally ſure, if we take care to be guided only by indiſputable facts, and diſtinct ideas.

Certainty alone is not ſufficient to make our knowledge valuable; it is the importance of our knowledge which gives a value to it. Now ſurely there is none which more nearly concerns us, than that which has for its object, the very object of all our deſires. I am ſenſible, that an inquiry which is to entertain us only with abſtract ideas, will leſs concern us than that which promiſes us agreeable ſenſations;

but it is not to the imagination that I propoſe to ſpeak concerning pleaſure: what I aim at, is to explain the nature of pleaſure, without ſo much as attempting to convey it. Theſe laws which regulate the riſe of pleaſure, not a little reſemble the ſource of the river Nile, which ſo enriches Egypt. We may be ignorant of theſe laws, and at the ſame time enjoy their benefits. If we have any curioſity to come at a knowledge of them, we cannot attain this, without travelling thro' ſome places which are ſolitary and unfrequented. However, I am perſuaded that thoſe who will purſue ſuch an undertaking, will find a degree of pleaſure even in their own reflections. Do we not enjoy nature, when we perceive her beauty?

ty? The theory of ſenſation not only preſents us with an object worthy of our higheſt attention, but likewiſe furniſhes us with the principles of arts which ſtill more concern us. Our moſt excellent poets, orators, and painters, have not been always actuated by the impulſe of inſtinct; they have oftentimes been guided in their performances by deep and refined reflections upon what was capable of affording pleaſure to the mind; they have as it were imprinted them in their works; and theſe being collected, have formed the theory of poeſy, oratory, and painting. All theſe ſpeculations are as ſo many disjointed parts, to which the theory of ſenſation is intitled to claim a right.

Amongſt all arts, there is ſurely none more intereſting than that of procuring happineſs: and there is no other whoſe fundamental principle has given riſe to a greater variety of opinions. Varro has reckoned up almoſt three hundred. However, it is upon this principle that the whole of moral philoſophy is built. In order to obtain a clear idea of which, we muſt go up as far as the laws of ſenſation; we muſt draw nigh to them, and allow ourſelves to be conducted by a thread of conſequences. In Plato's dialogue upon a republic, or rather upon internal juſtice, ſome of his dialogiſts complain, that lawgivers and philoſophers, in order to incite us to virtue, mention no other motive as an inducement, but the

the conſideration of thoſe advantages which flow from it; therefore they require of Socrates to prove to them, that virtue, by her own native charms, conſtitutes the happineſs of thoſe who have her in their poſſeſſion; this he does by a long compariſon betwixt the different forms of government, and that inward republic, which is formed within us by our reaſon and paſſions.

This doctrine of the Platonic ſchool may, as I apprehend, be very clearly eſtabliſhed by the theory of ſenſations. Let us thoroughly examine this point, and we ſhall ſoon come at the principles of a moſt exact ſyſtem of morality. It may very juſtly be ſaid againſt Epicurus, that he has only flattered

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our deſires, and promiſed us an imperfect happineſs, and that he was far from having a juſt idea of the value and extent of mental pleaſures. We acknowledge that an obſervance of the laws which our Creator has preſcribed, is the ſureſt way to keep off uneaſineſs and anxiety, and to lay up in our minds a ſtock of the moſt valuable ſenſations.

There are Chriſtians who imagine, that the goſpel condemns virtue to be unhappy in this life. The law of God, which, as it is ſet forth in the ſacred writings, has of itſelf ſo many enticements, is to ſuch perſons an inſupportable yoke. Were they to be once freed from that ſlaviſh dread with which they are fettered, then they would run out

out into the moſt enormous crimes. They are equally tortured by vice, which has the maſtery of them, as they are by the fear of puniſhment, which frightens them. It is not ſo with thoſe in whoſe hearts * perfect love caſteth out fear; they perceive no rigour in the goſpel, or the prophets; we are only commanded, according to Chriſt's own expreſſion, to love God and our neighbour. And what is there in this that our reaſon can contradict; ought not our heart to go along with us, in being benevolent to our fellow-creatures, or in ſubmitting to the decrees of a being of infinite wiſdom?

In the order of nature, an exerciſe that's agreeable to our facul-

* 1 John iv. 18.

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ties is always attended with pleaſing ſenſations. This ſource of lawful pleaſures is open no leſs to the Chriſtian than the infidel. But in the order of grace, the Chriſtian enjoys more happineſs by what he hopes for, than by what he actually poſſeſſes. Rais'd on high upon the wings of faith, into the boſom of God himſelf, there he beholds an ever-flowing ſtream of delights; and when from this immenſe height he looks down upon the preſent advantages and misfortunes of this world, he perceives the only deſign or uſe of them to be, in order to facilitate the acquiſition of that everlaſting happineſs which is offered. The theory of ſenſations does not go ſo high; it is only a branch of natural philoſophy, tho'

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one of the moſt important. It diſplays to us the wiſdom and goodneſs of our Creator; it aſſigns to the goods of this life, the proper claſs in which each of them is worthy to be placed; it ſupports moſt of the goſpel-maxims, contradicts none of them, and invites us to the practice of them, by ſhewing that there is, even in this life, a real pleaſure which accompanies the performance of our duty towards God, towards ourſelves, and towards our fellow-creatures. The more important this point is, the leſs ſuſceptible it is of ſhining diſcoveries. What can be ſaid new upon a ſubject, which ever ſince the origin of mankind, has been the perpetual object of the deſires of the heart, and the reflec-

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tions of the mind? In this production there will be nothing new, except the union of ſome ideas ſcattered in different authors, and theſe, when joined in a proper order, will form a regular work.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

There is an agreeable ſenſation, which accompanies whatever exerciſes the organs of the body, without weakening them.

THERE are ſome animated beings which ſeem to be ſufficient in themſelves. In the very ſpot where they are placed, they find every thing neceſſary for their preſervation and growth. It is not ſo with man: there is no bounds to the immenſity of his deſires. We may very juſtly apply to him, what Plato has ſaid of love: The goddeſs of want, and the god of riches, ſeem to have been equally concerned in his formation. He

is overwhelmed with wants, to ſupply which, all nature ſeems hardly ſufficient; at the ſame time he is enriched with variety of organs, which enable him to approach the moſt diſtant objects, to diſtinguiſh them, to lay hold of them, and to make uſe of them. Whatever cauſes a moderate exerciſe to theſe organs, is accompanied with an agreeable ſenſation. That reſtleſs diſpoſition which we obſerve in children, ſhews us what a pleaſing thing motion muſt be to them. Amongſt youth, dancing and hunting are the amuſements which are moſt followed; and the more briſk and lively theſe diverſions are, the more agreeable are they to them. Even old people, in whom age has blunted

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ed every other ſort of ſenſation, are pleaſed with moderate exerciſe.

M. Paſcal has imagined, that the fondneſs which men ſhew for all ſorts of diverſions and exerciſes, ariſes from a deſire which they have to ſhun themſelves, or avoid their own company: but, in my opinion, it proceeds from that pleaſure which accompanies the exerciſe of our different faculties; and tho' this pleaſure may make but a very little impreſſion, it is not for that reaſon the leſs real. Is it not a very common thing to ſee women, in order to drive away melancholy, employ themſelves in ſome ſlight work, by which they propoſe no other advantage but the amuſement?

The principle of this pleaſure conſiſts in the exerciſe of the organs of tranſpiration; as is evident from the obſervations of Sanctorius. There are certain vapours, not to be ſeen by our eyes, which are continually exhaled thro' the pores of the ſkin: Were theſe to remain too long in the blood, they would ſoon give a ſhock to our health. Beſides, the want of exerciſe, or immoderate exerciſe, equally diminiſh this inviſible exhalation. On the other hand, an exerciſe that is ſuited to our ſtrength, very much contributes to our health.

'Tis likewiſe owing to this motion of the organs of tranſpiration, that the warmth of a fire is ſo agreeable to us in winter, and the cooling breezes ſo refreſhing in ſummer;

ſummer; and whatever promotes the circulation of the blood, gives a grateful pleaſure. When we ſurvey an object, the colours diſtinguiſh it to our eyes. Some of them are dull and melancholy; but the greateſt part are agreeable. The experiments of Sir Iſaac Newton, ſufficiently ſhew us the reaſons of this difference. Theſe rays which have the greateſt force, make the moſt agreeable impreſſion, but their ſhining colours very ſoon tire the eye. Thoſe which form a green, having but a moderate motion, are therefore capable of exerciſing the fibres of the eye, without weakening them. The brown and dark colours carry in them the image of ſadneſs, becauſe they leave the eyes in a ſtate of inaction.

Whatever agreeably ſtrikes the ſight with its colours, becomes ſtill more pleaſing, by the greatneſs or variety of its parts. The vaſt extent of the ocean, the rivers which precipitate themſelves from the high mountains into the low vallies, the fields which preſent to our view the moſt charming landſkips; all theſe objects are agreeable, in proportion to the grandeur and variety of the images which are painted in the retina of the eye. It is the very ſame with hearing, as it is with ſeeing. We know by the obſervations which have been made by the moderns, that the tympanum of the ear is compoſed of an infinite number of nervous chords, each of which has a particular ſpring. A ſound is agreeable, in proportion as

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it affects a greater number of theſe fibres, with motions which have the neareſt reſemblance, and are oftenеſt united. On the contrary, a noiſe becomes troubleſome to the ear, when the fibres claſh and offend each other by the diſcord of their motions. Variety likewiſe adds pleaſure to ſounds: the moſt agreeable ceaſe to be ſo, and become tireſome, when the action has been too long repeated upon the ſame fibres.

M. de la Motte imagined, that words could in no ways be agreeable, but by the ideas which they conveyed to the mind. But muſt we give up our own inward experience, and that of all mankind, on purpoſe to rely upon his authority? There are not only ſounds, which,

which, of themſelves, touch the fibres of the ear with pleaſure, and others which tire them, but likewiſe the organs of ſpeech are aſſociated with thoſe of the ear, and the nerves by which they are connected, render their intereſt one and the ſame; thus we cannot with pleaſure hear thoſe ſounds which are pronounced with pain.

The agreement of taſtes and ſmells is in the ſame manner as wiſely adapted to our neceſſities, as that of colours and ſounds. The ſharp and pungent ſalts, if conveyed into the body in reſpiration or digeſtion, would produce diſeaſes; and for this reaſon, they diſcover their malignant quality, by the violence of their impreſſion upon the nervous papillæ,

papillæ, which conſtitute the ſeats of taſting and ſmelling.

The medicines which phyſicians preſcribe by way of cure, have frequently ſmells that are very diſagreeable; yet let us not be ſurpriſed at this. Health conſiſts in the juſt proportion of thoſe ſalts, ſulphurs, and other principles which compoſe our fluids: if any of them becomes predominant, or too much weakened, then ſickneſs enſues; and in order to reſtore the equal balance, we are frequently obliged to have recourſe to a remedy, which, to a man in health, would prove a ſlow poiſon.

But there are certain univerſal medicines preſcribed to us by the hand of nature, which are neceſſary in all diſtempers, and almoſt ſufficient.

ſufficient to cure them; theſe are, a proper regimen, and the uſe of liquors capable of diluting, cooling, and reſtoring the natural ſtate of the blood. When we ſtand in need of ſuch remedies, our taſte prefers them to thoſe aliments which would fatigue the organs of digeſtion, and produce pernicious juices.

That law which governs the impreſſions made upon the organs of the ſenſes, likewiſe extends to the organs of perſpiration. If the ſpring of the air, from which they derive their force, is weakened by ſcorching heat, then they fall into a languiſhing ſtate, which we feel very ſenſibly; and a freſh breeze again reſtores them to their wonted activity, and we are highly delighted.

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By theſe obſervations we perceive, that there are two ſorts of agreeable ſenſations; ſome of which, ſuch as the pleaſure we take in dancing, hunting, &c. appear to proceed from the commands of the will, and ſeem in a manner to ſpring from the boſom of our faculties; theſe preſerve the name of pleaſing ſenſations. The others, which we call agreeable, are formed by the impreſſion or idea of beings which are foreign to ourſelves. The ſoul then ſeems to launch beyond herſelf, in order to become acquainted with the amiable qualities of things preſented to her view. Each of theſe ſorts of ſenſation, feel equally whatever exerciſes our organs without fatiguing them.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

There is an agreeable ſenſation, which accompanies whatever exerciſes the mind, without fatiguing it.

EXerciſe of the mind is as neceſſary as that of the body, to preſerve our exiſtence. The ſenſes of other animals being more quick than ours, are ſufficient to direct them to whatever is agreeable to their nature, or to ſhun whatever is contrary thereunto: but we are endowed with a mind to ſupply the deficiency of our ſenſes, and pleaſure preſents herſelf in order to incite the mind to a proper exerciſe, and keep her from falling into a ſtate of fatal inactivity. Pleaſure,

ſure, which is the parent of diverſions and amuſements, is likewiſe the ſource of ſciences and arts: the whole univerſe is forced by our induſtry to pay tribute to our wants and deſires; at the ſame time, we cannot but acknowledge our obligation to the law of nature, which has annexed a degree of pleaſure to whatever exerciſes, without fatiguing the mind.

There have been ſome men, and thoſe called philoſophers too, who have maintained, that the exerciſe of the mind was in no other ways agreeable, but by our having in view the fame and reputation which it was likely we ſhould gain thereby. But is not our own inward reflection ſufficient to convince us, that we are often en-

gaged in reading and contemplation, without any future proſpect, without any other deſign than that of paſſing agreeably the preſent hours. This exerciſe of the mind is ſo charming, that it ſometimes tranſports the ſoul to ſuch a degree, that ſhe ſeems to have diſengaged herſelf from the body. Every one knows what has been recorded in hiſtory concerning Archimedes, and ſeveral other both ancient and modern geometricians. If we doubt the truth of theſe facts, let us at leaſt acknowledge the poſſibility of them, ſince every day we meet with ſuch a number of ſimilar examples. When we ſee a cheſs-player ſo much wrapp'd up in his own thoughts, as to be inſenſible to what ſtrikes upon his eyes or

ears,

ears, might we not then imagine him to be wholly taken up with his own fortune, or the good of the ſtate? Yet all this profound thought is only taken up with the pleaſure of exerciſing the mind, which is procured by the proper placing of a piece of ivory.

'Tis owing to this exerciſe of the mind, that we feel a pleaſure ariſing from ironical ſatires, and ſatirical encomiums; hence too we are delighted with delicate thoughts which genteelly bring to light a ſentiment that's hidden in the receſſes of the heart. In ſhort, it is owing to the ſame cauſe, that we are pleaſed with all thoſe ſhining expreſſions which convey to us a juſt ſenſe, notwithſtanding there may appear to be an inconſiſtency in the

terms. If we deſign only to inſtruct, then our ſtyle cannot be too clear; but if our intention is to pleaſe, then we may gratify the mind with an opportunity of exerciſing her penetration. The idea which we have a mind to convey, will acquire a new degree of excellence, if after the manner of Virgil's ſhepherdeſs, there be ſome pains taken to conceal it, in order to afford the greater pleaſure when it is diſcovered.

Order, ſymmetry, and proportion are agreeable, becauſe they render it eaſy for the mind to comprehend, and retain the different parts of an object.

One of our poets has attempted to baniſh from our poetry all harmony of ſound, and to confine it entire-

entirely to acroſtics, and other trifling works, all the merit of which is placed in their difficulty. He has not recollected that verſes are intended to be ſung, or ſpoke in public. They are delivered by an actor, or a muſician, and by this means communicated to a whole people; therefore it is neceſſary they ſhould be formed in ſuch a manner, that they may be eaſily imprinted on the memory. The verſification of the Greeks and Romans, by a regular diſpoſition of long and ſhort ſyllables, was ſufficient to render them eaſily retainable by the memory; but in our language, the almoſt equal length of all the ſyllables, ſeems to have obliged the poets to have recourſe to rhime.

M. de la Motte obſerving that, by the laws of nature, a repetition of the ſame ſounds is agreeable in poetry, aſks how it happens, that the very ſame thing ſhould be ſo highly offenſive in muſic? 'Tis becauſe the principal end of muſic is to charm by ſounds, and in this the muſician cannot better ſucceed, than by variety; whereas the buſineſs of a poet is not confined to the pleaſing of the ear alone, but he likewiſe aims at imprinting on the memory of his hearer a train of ideas and expreſſions. The deſign and ſcope of all his poetry is, to make a ſtrong and indelible impreſſion; accordingly, in moſt of the living languages, we find that rhime has been made

made uſe of as the beſt expedient to carry this deſign into execution.

However, let us not be ſo far blindly prejudiced in favour of our own verſification, as not to allow, that by the continual uniformity of its ſound, it is greatly inferior to that of the Greeks and Romans.

Imitation by colours, ſounds, geſtures, or diſcourſe, has the ſame advantage as ſymmetry or proportion. It preſents to our view objects which the imagination can eaſily comprehend, by the compariſon which is made with thoſe already known to us.

If we believe what Ariſtotle ſays, the repreſentation of an object is agreeable for this reaſon only, becauſe the mind by comparing it with the original, and inquiring into the juſtneſs

juſtneſs of the picture, acquires by this means a degree of knowledge. But is not the ſame ſort of acquiſition made when we ſpy out the imperfections of an unjuſt repreſentation? If this obſervation was to hold good, the works of all painters, poets, orators, and muſicians, notwithſtanding there might be ever ſo great a difference in the execution, would give an equal degree of pleaſure. Imitation, according to other philoſophers, pleaſes only as it affects the paſſions; it is certain, indeed, that it derives from thence its moſt powerful charms; but ſtill we muſt allow, that any object, tho' ever ſo little intereſting, will touch the ſoul with ſome degree of pleaſure, provided it be expreſſed with truth,

and

and there be an exact reſemblance betwixt the picture and the original. When all the parts of a whole are formed, and ranged in ſuch a diſpoſition, that the mind can with eaſe take in and retain the idea, then it cannot fail to be agreeable.

Contraſt is no leſs eaſy to be comprehended by the imagination than reſemblance. It makes oppoſite objects to approach each other. It brings to light the characteriſtics of one, by comparing them with thoſe of another. Hence we ſee, that the antient ſculptors, in order to heighten the beauty of a Venus, or one of the Graces, have encloſed it in the hollow ſtatue of a Satyr; Virgil has made uſe of the like piece of ingenuity; and in order to paint, in the moſt lively colours,

lours, the perturbation of Dido's breaſt, he places the picture in that of a night, wherein the moſt profound reſt reigned thro' the whole face of nature.

But if contraſt and reſemblance have the ſame advantage, it may be aſked, whether they may be uſed indifferently? No, certainly they cannot. Contraſt is very ſucceſsfully made uſe of, in poems, pictures, and other works, wherein the parts are intended to be ſeen in ſucceſſion; whereas in thoſe which are deſigned to be taken in at one view, ſuch as the front of a building, proportion ought to prevail in all the correſpondent parts: the ſight could not but be offended at a diſparity, the reaſon of which could not appear to the mind.

mind. There are ſtill more proportions than thoſe of equality or oppoſition, which are eaſy for the comprehenſion; and they are very ſucceſsfully made uſe of in the fineſt arts. Thus the height of porticos in regular buildings is double to their width, the height of the entablature is the fourth of that of the column; and the third of it ſerves for the height of the pedeſtal. All great architects among the different proportions compatible with the principal deſign of their works, have always fixed upon thoſe which the mind could moſt eaſily comprehend.

As it is with the architect, ſo is it likewiſe with the muſician. Numbers which are eaſily compared, are thoſe which beſt expreſs the harmonious

monious agreement of his compoſition; and the moſt pleaſing ſounds are thoſe which convey to the ſoul the greateſt exerciſe, with the leaſt fatigue.

There are bold and elevated pieces of muſic; theſe only pleaſe the niceſt connoiſſeurs in that ſcience. By their exquiſite taſte they can, with the greateſt eaſe, diſcern, amongſt ſounds ſeeming to diſagree, a relation which eſcapes ears that are leſs refined.

Among all the different proportions, there is none which affords a more pleaſing contemplation to the mind, than that perfect agreement of all the parts of a work, with the ultimate end propoſed therein. This is the chief of all the beauties; it is this which influences

fluences and preſides over all the other parts; and they are to be looked upon as beauties or imperfections, according as they agree with this grand and principal deſign.

Some of the orators of Rome and Athens have given to their proſe an harmonious ſweetneſs, little inferior to that of poetry. Cicero, one of the moſt celebrated among them, has pointed out to us the chief means which they made uſe of to ſucceed herein. In every ſentence, the different parts of which required to be properly divided by the pauſe of the voice, that they might be pronounced with eaſe and gracefulneſs, they were extremely careful to conſtruct them in ſuch a manner, that they might

be as it were linked together in the hearer's memory, either by a certain proportional connection, or a ſort of gradation in their periods. * A diſcourſe is deſigned to be eaſily comprehended and retained by thoſe who are the hearers; and is then moſt agreeable, when, without affectation, it is formed in ſuch a manner as may beſt anſwer that end.

Great artiſts then are careful to adapt all the different parts of their works to the ſame end: but this alone is not ſufficient; they likewiſe fix upon one particular part, in which they make all the reſt to center.

The Gothic architects loved to place, on each ſide of their build-

* Cic. c. 3. De orat. c. 103.

ings,

ings, huge piles of ſtones, which diſtracted the ſight, and rendered it indiſtinct. Bramant, and after him the greateſt part of the modern architects, being better acquainted than their predeceſſors with the art of agreeably ſtriking the ſight, place in the middle of the building ſome conſpicuous part, which preſents to the eye a fixed point, from whence it may eaſily be carried thro' the whole extent of the work. Our great painters obſerve the ſame rule. The whole groupe of their figures is ranged in ſuch a manner, that there is always one in particular which predominates over the reſt, and, as it were, holds them under its command.

Poets follow the ſame maxim in the diſpoſition of their images.

They are not only careful to keep all the different characters in a ſort of ſubordination to the principal hero; but they likewiſe endeavour to make all the incidents with which they preſent us, ſubſervient to one great event. And, what can be more ſatisfactory to the mind, than to be able at once to take in ſuch a number of facts, ſo connected together by the general relation which they bear to one important action?

We may, without doubt, compriſe in a poem different fables, and place there, as in a gallery, a ſucceſſion of various repreſentations. Ovid has followed this method, as well as Statius, and ſeveral other poets.

But

But ſeveral ages before their time, and when poetry was yet in its infancy, Homer perceived that it would be a more agreeable ſpectacle to the mind, to collect and introduce into one picture a number of actors, and make them all promotive of the ſame action. Upon this idea, he firſt formed the plan of an epic poem.

A conſiderable time afterwards, upon the plan of an epic poem, Æſchylus formed that of tragedy, by the real repreſentation of an event brought to light in all its circumſtances. This famous rival of Homer found, that a dramatic poem would afford to the mind ſtill a greater degree of charms, when one principal action connected all the ſcenes, and held

them in a manner linked together in the memory. Moreover, Æſchylus likewiſe added the unity of time and place to that of the action: 'tis true, indeed, that in his Eumenides the ſcene paſſes from Delphi to Athens; but in the reſt of his pieces, it always continues the ſame.

M. de la Motte has attempted to deliver the dramatic poets from the obligation of that law, which Æſchylus, and others of the ancients, ſeem to have impoſed upon them. This celebrated advocate for the moderns has behaved in the empire of learning, in ſome meaſure as the ſectaries did in Europe, about two hundred years ago. If he had been contented with declaring war againſt ſuperſtition only, then all

ſenſible

ſenſible people would have joined with him. But being incited by the warmth of his zeal, he has broke to pieces images which were worthy of the higheſt regard; he has run down the moſt ſacred opinions, and has ſubſtituted in their place the moſt diſgraceful notions.

This broacher of new opinions is ſo much the more dangerous, as reaſon ſeems ſometimes to ſhew herſelf in his favour. Very happy it is for the church and ſtate, that they have nothing to fear from this pretended reformation, which may only occaſion wars which are innocent, and ſuch too as are often more beneficial than peace.

By the theory of ſenſation it appears certain, that the obſerving theſe three unities is not a meer arbi-

arbitrary rule, becauſe there is a degree of pleaſure annexed to whatever enables the imagination to form an exact repreſentation of an object preſented to her view.

However, we muſt acknowledge, that as the pleaſures which affect the heart have the ſuperiority over thoſe of the imagination, therefore if the keeping up to theſe unities was only to make the repreſentation more eaſy to the apprehenſion, then indeed we might ſacrifice this advantage, when, by ſo doing, we could make the ſcenes more intereſting by the number and variety of incidents. But there is another circumſtance which muſt be taken into conſideration.

In dramatic poetry, whatever tends to make it leſs intereſting muſt

muſt be looked upon as an imperfection; while, on the other hand, whatever contributes to heighten the impoſition on the fancy is highly agreeable. If an old man acts the character of a youth, whilſt a young man puts on that of age; if the decorations repreſent the fields and country, when at the ſame time the ſcene is ſuppoſed to be in a palace; or if the dreſſes are not ſuitable to the dignity of the perſons; then certainly all theſe diſagreements will be offenſive. The caſe is the ſame when the unity of time, place, and action is not obſerved. Let us ſuppoſe the principal action of a theatrical piece to be multiplied; let ſeveral ages paſs away in the ſpace of a few hours; let the ſpectator, in a moment, be tranſported from one

part

part of the world to another; will not all theſe things appear as the higheſt abſurdities, while, at the ſame time, they will bring into our mind the fiction of the repreſentation, and, as a voice, proclaim to us the folly of waſting real tears on feigned ſorrows?

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

There is a pleaſure which accompanies all the motions of the heart, where fear and hatred have not the aſcendency.

THE human ſoul is ſuſceptible of love or hatred, and it is by theſe paſſions that we are ſtrongly attached to what ſeems to be our good, while, at the ſame time, we reject or fly from what appears to be the contrary; theſe are the two ſprings which put all our faculties in motion.

Hatred and the paſſions which ariſe from thence, are of neceſſity accompanied with a painful ſenſation, proceeding from the idea that we conceive of the evil which afflicts

afflicts, or threatens to afflict us. The infectious poiſon is conveyed into our very blood, and diſturbing the courſe of tranſpiration, as appears evidently from the obſervations of Sanctorius, diffuſes a diſagreeable impreſſion through the whole of the human body. Nevertheleſs there is a ſort of ſweetneſs which ſerves to allay this bitterneſs. The ſoul feels a pleaſure in thoſe paſſions which appear moſt ſuited to her preſent ſituation, and ſeem to have a tendency to deſtroy whatever threatens her. Such are the greateſt part of our ſenſations. Pleaſure and pain jointly make up the compoſition, which becomes agreeable, or diſagreeable, in proportion as the former or latter of theſe ingredients do moſt prevail.

There

There are, at the ſame time, certain lively pleaſures which are produced in the very boſom of hatred: the deſtruction of one's enemy appears the greateſt of all bleſſings. There are even men, in whoſe eyes no object appears ſo charming, as the downfal of a neighbour, whom they accounted to be happy. The proſperity of another perſon increaſes the pain of their miſery, and they are highly delighted when they ſee removed from their proſpect, what was offenſive to their ſight.

Yet under all theſe malevolent pleaſures, there lies concealed a hidden miſery, which is only ſomewhat ſoftened, and the ſenſation for a time ſuſpended. Thus every man who is of an envious and miſ-

chievous diſpoſition, is naturally of a melancholy and gloomy turn of mind.

All other motions of the heart, beſides thoſe of fear or hatred, are agreeable. Whatever we feel of compaſſion, friendſhip, gratitude, generoſity, or benevolence, affords us a pleaſing ſenſation. How unhappy are the damned! ſaid St Catherine of Genes, becauſe they are no longer capable of loving: whilſt every perſon of a benevolent ſoul, has a natural mirth and gaiety in his temper.

The influence of love and friendſhip is ſo great, that it even gives charms to ſorrow itſelf. Has death ſweeped off the object of your neighbour's higheſt affection? Do not ſport with his ſorrow, if you have

have any regard to his happineſs. He would give a repulſe to your unſeaſonable comfort, and would break forth into theſe words of the poet,

Mon deuil me plait, et doit toujours me plaire,
Il me tient lieu de celui que je pleurs †.

'Tis then that the ſoul repreſents to herſelf the idea of the perſon beloved in the moſt lively colours; ſhe beholds, ſhe enjoys it, and this enjoyment, tho' imaginary, affords her a real pleaſure. A love of one's ſelf being joined to this tender con-

† My ſorrow pleaſes me, and ought always to do ſo, ſince to me it ſupplies the place of him whom I bewail.

cern, contributes likewiſe to make the grief ſtill more intereſting: we love to recal thoſe ſenſations which have flattered us, and we applaud ourſelves as having had merit to deſerve them.

Let us attend to what Montagne ſays *, when he gives an account of the affliction which he felt at the death of his intimate friend, La-Boëtie. "I know, ſays he, "alas! too well do I know by my "own experience, that there is no "comfort ſo pleaſing after the "death of our friends, as the re- "membrance of our ſtrict friend- "ſhip with them. O my friend! "is it not a duty of my life, and "a duty alſo full of piety and de- "light, for ever to perform your

* Eſſays, l. 2. c. 8.

"funeral

" funeral rites? and can there be " any earthly enjoyment which is " able to compenſate the loſs of " ſuch a pleaſure!"

Cicero obſerves *, that there was ſomewhat of a ſecret pleaſure, to alleviate the exceſſive grief which Lælius fell into upon the death of Scipio.

There have been devout viſionaries, who have attempted to render their mind ſo far abſtracted, as to deſire the continuation of their love for God, and the annihilation of that pleaſure which they felt in loving him. But to take away pleaſure from the idea of loving, would be the ſame as if we were to take away roundneſs from the idea of a circle. Love is purely

* In Læl.

diſintereſted, when we have in view no other advantage reſulting from thence, but the pleaſure which accompanies the act itſelf. The diſintereſtedneſs of the Chriſtian ought to advance thus far, and can go no farther.

If there have been divines who have imagined the ſoul to be capable of being wholly diſintereſted with regard to pleaſure, as a balance to them, there have been philoſophers who have believed her unable to be ſwayed by any motives but thoſe which took their riſe from the proſpect of ſelf-intereſt. But, in order to confute this notion, let us, but for a moment, take a view of our public theatres. The ſhews exhibited there, tho' they are often culcula-

ted

ted to debauch the mind, yet are ſufficient to convince us, that ſhe is formed for virtue. What means our tears for unfortunate heroes! With what joy would we reſcue them from their impending ruin? Whence comes this attachment? does it proceed from the ties of blood or friendſhip? No, it does not; but they are men who appear to be virtuous: we have implanted in us the ſeeds of benevolence, which are always ready to ſpring up in favour of virtue, and incline us to humanity, when their growth is not obſtructed by contrary paſſions. Hiſtory furniſhes us with the ſtory of a Grecian tyrant, who being preſent at the repreſentation of Euripides's Hecuba, went out at the end of the firſt act,

act, filled with a conſcious ſhame; when he found himſelf, in ſpite of himſelf, all in tears; by this means, ſhewing a tender feeling for the manes of the Trojans, which he never had felt for his own countrymen. Cruel when in purſuit of what ſeemed to be his intereſt, yet by nature formed for humanity, which he could not with-hold from thoſe illuſtrious, but unfortunate men, from whom he had nothing to fear, he paid to them the tribute of benevolence which was their due.

Since the motions of the heart are agreeable where benevolence reigns, and only become painful when hatred prevails, for this reaſon we are of opinion, that the ancients ought to have account-

ed.

ed thoſe tragedies only to be defective, which raiſed the misfortunes of virtuous perſons to ſuch a degree, as to kindle our indignation, but not thoſe wherein our ſollicitude for their fate is worked up to the cataſtrophe, and at laſt gives place to the joy of ſeeing them completely happy.

However, we muſt ſo far agree with Ariſtotle and his commentators, that a ſtrong regard for our own preſervation makes us more ready to receive the impreſſion of ſorrow than pleaſure; ſo that the ſoul more deeply intereſts herſelf with the misfortunes of a virtuous hero, than with his proſperity. His happineſs, no doubt, would have given us joy: but by a certain magic power of tragedy, his very miſ-

misfortunes affect us with a ſort of pleaſing ſorrow, more agreeable than joy itſelf; becauſe it affords a more lively exerciſe to our benevolence and humanity, the hidden charms of which are ſo powerful, as to be able to convert grief into pleaſure, and render tears more agreeable than ſmiles.

But by what miracle is it brought about, that we ſhould be ſo agreeably entertained with certain repreſentations on the ſtage, while, at the ſame time, had they been really performed before us, we ſhould have been ſhocked with inward horror? 'Tis owing to the different poſition of the object, that we feel ſuch different impreſſions. The more likely the misfortunes of others are to reach us, ſo much the more

more we dread their becoming perſonal; whereas thoſe which tragedy preſents us with, are ſeen at a remote view; they do not alarm the love we bear to ourſelves, they only excite that benevolent love which prevails within us in favour of virtuous perſons.

Love retains ſomething charming, even in the want of the object of its deſire. We always, in ſome degree, enjoy what we hope for; whereas we have not always the enjoyment of what we really poſſeſs. It is more pleaſing to be carried by our wiſhes towards the leaſt object, than really to poſſeſs the greateſt advantages, while the heart remains inactive.

Hope gives an agreeable proſpect to the novelty of all the different

ſorts

ſorts of happineſs which we have in view: eager after pleaſure, we flatter ourſelves with the thoughts of obtaining it, from all unknown objects which ſeem to promiſe the gratification of our deſires.

Truth herſelf is indebted to this ſecret hope for ſome part of her beautiful luſtre. She often puts on a flattering appearance, attracting the mind by the pleaſing hopes of ſucceſs in a difficult inquiry, while ſhe captivates the heart with the agreeable thoughts of poſſeſſing what is promiſed. But generally her principal charm decays when ſhe becomes known to us: that pleaſure which ſerved to make us move chearfully when in queſt of truth, vaniſhes at once when we have obtained that acquiſition: its real uſefulneſs

fulneſs then conſtitutes the whole worth of it. Novelty loſes a great part of her attractive faculty with regard to old people. They have learned by experience to diſtruſt her promiſes.

The pleaſure of variety is next to that of novelty. Amongſt a croud of different objects preſented to our ſight, there are always ſome of them which offer ſomewhat new.

Such is the excellence of variety, that oftentimes we prefer it to order or proportion. Is it not this that makes us frequently quit the moſt regular gardens, and walk out into the fields?

Thus tho' we ſhould give to our works all the perfection which they are capable of receiving from art,

and all the exactneſs which men of the moſt exquiſite taſte can require; this may be agreeable, but this alone will not be ſufficient. The Gothic architects divided their buildings into a number of different portions; a crowd of little ſtatues clogged the front of their moſt magnificent edifices. This method appeared quite low and ſordid to the great artiſts of the ſixteenth century, as Caſtelvetro informs us, he had heard it ſo affirmed by Michael Angelo: and accordingly they again enriched the fine arts with that majeſtic grandeur, which is ſo conſpicuous in all the Grecian and Roman monuments.

However, we muſt obſerve, with the author of reflections upon poetry

poetry and painting, that there are certain ſubjects which ſeem neceſſary to be drawn in miniature. This famous writer believes, that there can be no reaſon aſſigned for this. But it appears to me, that it is the character of the perſons which determines it. A majeſtic ſtature would not at all ſuit a comical character. However this may be, if a work of art does not make a clear and ſtrong impreſſion upon the ſenſes, or the imagination; if it does not do this, I ſay, it will never be able to raiſe in the ſoul ſenſations which are lively, deep, or laſting; and it is from theſe that poetry, oratory, painting, muſic, and all other arts, derive their moſt powerful charms. In vain will great artiſts endeavour to flatter our

eyes or ears with the moſt perfect imitation; for if they do not preſent us with an object that's intereſting, the reward of all their induſtry will be but the faint acknowledgment of a meer momentary admiration; and we ſhall highly condemn them for not having exerciſed their talents, in exciting ſenſations of the heart, which are the only ſource of true pleaſures.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the beauty of the body, the imagination, and the ſoul.

NATURE has enlightned us with knowledge, nor has ſhe confined this to the ſenſation alone of what paſſes within ourſelves. The qualities of others are likewiſe the objects of our knowledge, and they give us pleaſure or pain according as they are agreeable, or otherwiſe, to the exiſtence of thoſe who poſſeſs them.

We cannot help being ſeized with an inward horror, when we behold other men with broken limbs, troubleſome excreſcencies, or of a cadaverous colour. On the contrary, a happy temperature

of the blood, is ſhewn by an agreeable colour of the complexion; and the organs, which without having any thing ſuperfluous, poſſeſs every thing neceſſary for the perfect execution of their offices, are characterized by the agreeable turn of the features.

Some parts of the body, ſuch as the forehead, are ſuſceptible of different forms, which nevertheleſs do not render them incapable of anſwering their deſign. Their beauty is in this caſe arbitrary. Thus it was in Egypt and Syria, that a favourable prepoſſeſſion adorned thoſe features, which had no other excellence, but that of having ſome reſemblance to thoſe of Alexander and Cleopatra.

Beauty varies according to the different climates in which nature has placed us. There is a beauty which ſhines in the Farneſian Hercules, as well as in the Venus of Medicis. It is even remarkable in the auſtere brow and wrinkles of Michael Angelo's Moſes. So that for every age, and every ſex, there is a peculiar ſpecies of ornament appropriated to every thing judged beautiful.

Some climates are not productive of regular beauties. There the idea of what is beautiful, is not placed in what really is ſo, but in what has the leaſt deformity.

The beauties of the imagination furniſh us with an entertainment ſtill more agreeable than thoſe of outward figure; and unleſs we are touched with envy or hatred, we can-

cannot, without pleaſure, behold a lively penetration in another, which at once diſtinguiſhes truth and error; and we are charmed with a happy fancy, which entertains us with intereſting pictures. A graceful air ſtrikes us more than the beauty of the body, becauſe it is as a tranſparent vail thro' which the mind may be obſerved. This gracefulneſs conſiſts in the proper diſpoſition of the attitude, the geſture, the movement, and the juſt expreſſion of the thoughts, and adapting all of them to the end propoſed. Moreover, if the execution of our deſign is not too much laboured. but ſeems to be done in the moſt natural and eaſy manner, this will render the whole ſtill more agreeable.

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The beauty of a lively genius, however ſparkling it may be, is yet totally eclipſed by that of the ſoul. The moſt refined ſallies of wit have nothing equal, or to be compared with the luſtre of thoſe charms which are ſo conſpicuous in a courageous, diſintereſted, benevolent ſoul. Our theatres will always reſound with applauſes in favour of the magnanimity of the high-prieſt, who had the fear of God, and no other fear: and mankind, in all ages, will applaud the generous humanity of Titus, who lamented the loſs of all that time which he had not employed in making his fellow-creatures happy.

Theſe native charms of the ſoul ſometimes inſpire us with a warm affection for the dead. How comes

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it that Plutarch, in his compariſons, has a power over us ſuperior to that of much greater hiſtorians, ſo as to make us read him over and over again, and yet always imgine it to be the firſt time? 'tis becauſe he there gives us a ſort of hiſtory of noble ſentiments.

There have been ſome men, and theſe too famous for their knowledge of the human heart, who ſeem to have thought, that the pleaſure which we take in the beauty of the ſoul, is only a ſecret joy ariſing from ſelf-love, when we behold ſuch qualities in another as are favourable to our own particular intereſt. But in anſwer to this, we may venture to affirm, that a traitor appears infamous, even to the very people whom he has ſa-

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ved by his treachery. A prodigal is ridiculous to the very man whom he enriches by his own ruin. On the other hand, a ſtranger whom we know nothing of, one that's dead, attracts our admiration by an act of virtue, from which it is impoſſible we can ever reap any advantage; nay, it is not impoſſible, that even whilſt our enemy ſtrikes a dread into us, we may, at the ſame time, be charmed with the greatneſs of his courage.

It it is with the beauty of the ſoul, as with that of the body. It diſtinguiſhes the qualities which are moſt ſuited to the exiſtence of thoſe who poſſeſs them. What can be more convenient for the weak ſtate of man, than by our benevolence to engage others in our intereſt, to

preſerve

preſerve a reſolution in our greateſt dangers, and to treaſure up in our own breaſts, a richneſs and greatneſs of ſoul, which may render us independent of fortune?

But if the obſervation holds true, that the beauty of the body, as well as the mind and ſoul, marks out the qualities which are moſt uſeful to thoſe who poſſeſs them; whence comes it about, that they likewiſe convey a pleaſure to a ſoul which is an entire ſtranger to them?

Here let us admire the wiſdom and goodneſs of our Creator.

If we turn our eyes upon the weakneſs of man, when in a ſtate of infancy, when oppreſſed with infirmities, when in ſolitude, or when worn out with years; if we conſider his turn for arts and ſciences,

ces, his fondneſs for eſteem and applauſe, together with his deſire of friendſhip and company; theſe conſiderations will point out to us, that he is formed for ſociety; that there are ſecret ties which unite him in the cloſeſt manner to thoſe who ſurround him in life. Beſides, in this ſituation, it was of the higheſt importance that we ſhould be able at once to diſcern thoſe men whoſe correſpondence might be uſeful to us, as well as thoſe who might prove deſtructive. If we perceive a cadaverous colour in the complexion, an unhappy turn in the imagination, and a dark and gloomy diſpoſition of the ſoul, theſe qualities, fatal to him who poſſeſſes them, and dangerous to thoſe who approach him, ſhock us by their

deformity, and are, as it were, the cry of nature, who cautions us to guard againſt an enemy who threatens us. On the other hand, a happy conformation of organs, a delicacy of imagination, and a peculiar beauty of ſoul, by contributing to the happineſs of him who poſſeſſes them, may, at the ſame time, promote the felicity of thoſe who have any communication with him. Fine features adorn thoſe amiable qualities of the ſoul, and in a manner promiſe that they may be uſeful to ourſelves, in the different circumſtances of life wherein we may be placed. 'Tis probably this beneficent care of nature which has occaſioned the contempt of thoſe, who, inſtead of acknowledging the hand of God in the beauty of

of the ſoul, have imagined that it ſprung from the reflections of ſelf-love, upon what might be for its own advantage: as if this ſtrong impreſſion which it makes upon us, was not prior to all our obſervations.

The beauty of good morals, the greateſt ornament of mankind, is nothing elſe but the beauty of the ſoul marked out in the conduct of life. If in works of art, the relation of the means to the end is ſufficient to embelliſh them, what ſpectacle can be more agreeable, than the relation of all the actions of a virtuous man to an end ſuited to his talents, to his condition, to the happineſs of his fellow-creatures, as well as his own felicity? On the other hand, what deformity

can be more offenſive to the ſight, than to ſee friendſhip and juſtice given up as a ſacrifice to ſelf-intereſt? What more ſcandalous than the debaſing ourſelves by the meanneſs of the objects which we purſue, or blindly giving up ourſelves to the dictates of a raſh preſumption, or wavering to and fro in unſettled principles,

† *Tournant au moindre vent, tombant au moindre choc,*
Aujourd'hui dans un caſque, & demain dans un froc?

Diotimus, ſo much celebrated by the praiſe of Socrates, had very good reaſon to perſuade him not

† Changing with the gentleſt gale, falling by the ſlighteſt ſhock; to-day a warrior, and to-morrow a devotee.

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to look upon the beauties of nature and art *, in any other light than as ſteps which were to conduct him to a ſuperior beauty. Let us extend and refine our taſte, till at laſt we render it perfect, and able to reliſh this beauty, of which wiſdom is a branch; if we even have that affection, and give the reſpect which is due to virtue, this, in ſome degree, is being virtuous.

'Tis the united beauty of the ſoul and the imagination, which conſpire to form that valuable and uncommon accompliſhment which is but faintly expreſſed by the term *Urbanity*, which ſhines ſo much through the moſt of Plato's and Cicero's works; 'tis a genteel politeneſs which knows how to approve

* Plat. in Sympos.

without being fulſome; to give praiſe unmix'd with envy; and to rally without ill-nature; which points out the foibles of mankind with a ſprightly humour, unaccompanied with malice, which is able to throw the graveſt ſubjects into the moſt agreeable dreſs, either by an ironical turn, or by a delicacy of expreſſion; from gravity it paſſes to pleaſantry, and employs an eaſy wit, which affords a double pleaſure to the mind, becauſe it is not hidden or perplex'd, while, at the ſame time, it leaves room for ſomewhat of conjecture, and gives a pleaſing joyful appearance to all the ſentiments of virtue.

The air of the face, and the whole perſon, ſometimes bring into one point of view, all theſe different

rent kinds of beauty. There is a certain analogy which the outward figure preſerves with the qualities which characterize the moral diſpoſitions of the ſoul and mind.

The happy conformation of the organs is denoted by an air of freedom and boldneſs; that of the fluids, by an air of vivacity and briſkneſs; an air of delicacy is as it were a ſpark which proceeds from a fine imagination; an air of ſoftneſs denotes deluſive complaiſance; a majeſtic air indicates a ſublimity of ſentiment; a tender ſweetneſs in the air is a ſure mark of a return of friendſhip.

All theſe different airs are agreeable, not only becauſe of the qualities which they expreſs, but likewiſe by the ſenſations which they excite

excite in the perſon who perceives them: and they become more or leſs ſo, in proportion to the ſecret relations which they bear to our particular diſpoſitions.

Thoſe animals which ſtrike us by their beauty, give us this agreeable impreſſion, either from the brightneſs of their colour, or the gracefulneſs which they ſeem to have in their motion, and the ſenſations which they ſeem to expreſs to us by their air.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the ſatisfaction which is annexed to virtuous pleaſures; that is to ſay, ſuch as are proofs of our perfection.

HItherto I have confined myſelf to the conſideration of thoſe objects, which, of themſelves, are agreeable; but there are likewiſe others which become ſo, merely by the relation which they bear to theſe firſt objects: ſuch is perfection.

Among all the goods of life, which flatter us by the pleaſing aſpect which they put on, perfection is the moſt valuable; it is as it were the ſtandard of happineſs; and there is a ſecret charm which accom-

accompanies whatever perſuades us that we are in poſſeſſion of it. But this idea ſo intereſting, is created by our own fancy, out of the different materials furniſhed by education, conſtitution, ſociety, and our own reflections: generally we imagine it to conſiſt of an aſſemblage of qualities foreign to us, which can be given or taken away by the caprice of fortune: How abſurd is the miſtake! but reaſon eaſily triumphs over it, and always predominates in men led by her dictates.

The chief end of all moral philoſophy, is to give us clear ideas relating to this point.

Confucius and Zeno have placed perfection in an exerciſe of our faculties ſuited to the nature of our beings.

beings. We are by nature intelligent beings; we are formed for ſociety; we are then perfect when truth directs our judgment, and juſtice prevails in all our actions.

Pythagoras, Socrates, and divines of all religions, have believed the perfection of man, and, at the ſame time, that of the works of all reaſonable beings, to depend entirely on the relation of their faculties to the deſign of their Creator.

In ſhort, according to Epicurus, man is perfect when the method of his thinking and acting is ſuch, as to conduct him by the moſt ſhort and eaſy way towards the end he propoſes to himſelf, that is, towards his own happineſs. Thoſe three different manners of conſidering perfection

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are ſo nearly related, that they ought not in reality to be diſtinguiſhed. Perfection conſiſts in the poſſeſſion of ſuch qualities of the body, mind, and ſoul, as are calculated to procure our greateſt happineſs, in conformity to the intentions of our Creator, which are deeply imprinted in the very nature of our being. We arrive at a higher degree of perfection, in proportion as the body is leſs diſtempered; and is capable of performing the motions allotted to it, according as the mind is leſs miſled by error, and can with eaſe comprehend, and ſet forth the beauty of truth. In ſhort, we become more perfect, in proportion as the ſoul is leſs depraved in her taſte, and the more free ſhe is from the ſeeds of envy, melancholy, and un-

uneaſineſs, and the more ſhe is diſpoſed to regulate all her deſires by a clear and certain judgment, the object of which is ſolid and laſting happineſs.

But let us not confine this ſolid and laſting happineſs to the limits of a few years. Our own inward reflection ought to convince every being which has the principle of thinking, that this principle is indiviſible, and conſequently immortal. The proſpect of a future felicity, ought always to be conſidered by us as the principal part of our preſent happineſs.

'Tis from this idea of perfection that friendſhip borrows all her charms, tho' indeed Epicurus, and other philoſophers, have imagined the ſource of it to be derived from

our inability, without the aſſiſtance of others, to procure the neceſſaries and conveniences of life. But if there is ſuch a tie, which is only a mercenary traffic of intereſts, there is another, the object of which is much more noble; in this laſt we leſs conſider advantages received from others, than the proofs we have of their perfection. The liberality of Claudius towards me, ſaid Paſſienus, I account more valuable than his friendſhip; but the friendſhip of Auguſtus appears to me more precious than his very bounty *.

The charms of grandeur do not conſiſt, as M. Paſchal imagined, in keeping thought at a diſtance, and ſo hindering the great from think-

* Seneca, l. 10. De benef.

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ing on themſelves. The greateſt pleaſure attending that ſtate, conſiſts rather in this, that all with whom the grandees converſe, are extremely aſſiduous to heighten and exalt the ideas they have conceived of their own perſons and qualities.

Moſt of our vices only debaſe and ſink us beneath our reaſon, becauſe they flatter us. We content ourſelves with receiving from an appearance of perfection, an inward ſatisfaction, which can only flow from real perfection. Weak fooliſh mortals! an empty ſhadow is ſufficient to make the ſtrongeſt impreſſion on us; whatever clothes itſelf with the outward form of ſtrength, dexterity, or virtue, makes its way to us by the moſt endearing charms.

It is this chimerical perfection which gives ſo high a value to revenge. Ariſtotle has made it appear evident by ſeveral facts, that when we are equally enraged againſt ſeveral enemies, and our revenge has been remarkably glutted upon one of them, this blunts the edge of our reſentment againſt all the reſt. We have then given one ſignal proof of our power, and for this reaſon we are leſs ardent to ſeek a ſecond.

But pride, in order to flatter us, has no occaſion to diſplay to our ſight the luſtre of all our perfections. Whatever contributes to ſink other men, at the ſame time raiſes us by the compariſon which we make of their condition with our own. The faults and diſgraces of others, are matter

matter of pleaſure to us, unleſs they become objects of compaſſion. We have, by nature, a tender ſympathy for the misfortunes of others, when they appear conſiderable; but if they are ſlight, then we love to enjoy this kind of ſuperiority, which our being free from them ſeems to give us.

It indeed would be to baniſh all enjoyment from ſociety, were we not to admit of that innocent raillery, which, with good humour, exerciſes a ſort of requiſite juſtice upon the imperfections of others: but thoſe are an unhappy ſet of mortals, who take a pleaſure in being too ſevere upon the failings of mankind; for this malicious propenſity has a real miſery concealed under it. This is ſtriving

to be rich by the poverty and indigence of another.

It is with our perfection as it is with every thing elſe which is capable of a proof; it is proved to us not only by the evidence of our own ſenſations, but likewiſe by the authority of others.

We cannot help wiſhing for the approbation of thoſe among whom we live; and this we do independently of any motive of intereſt. Self-love will ſcarce preſume to vindicate itſelf, unleſs it has the concurrent approbation of others. This fondneſs for eſteem is naturally proportioned to the extent of our abilities. An elevation of genius and greatneſs of ſoul prompts a man to look for an acknowledgment of the excellency of his judgment, from men of all climates and all

all ages. It is true indeed, we may ſay of the wiſe man, if there is any one worthy of the title, what the moſt ancient writer of tragedy has ſaid of one of his heroes *: Content with being really praiſe-worthy, he cares not whether he has the praiſe or not. But even this man is not quite free from the deſire of glory: he only carries it a degree farther than the reſt of mankind; he aſpires at having the approbation of God himſelf.

The eſteem of others not only flatters us by the favourable idea which it gives us of our perſonal qualities, but becauſe it perſuades us, that others conſider our happineſs as making part of theirs. So great is our connection and depen-

* Æſchylus, Amphiaraus.

dence

dence upon each other, that there is not one man who is not able to diſturb our felicity, tho' there are more who incline to procure and increaſe it. What can be more happy for us, in our weak ſtate, than to perceive, in all around us, an univerſal inclination to favour our wiſhes?

But if the eſteem of others has in itſelf no allurement, but according to the happineſs which it promiſes us, how comes it that we ſhould endeavour to procure it by the ſacrifice of our lives? Hiſtory has immortalized ſuch Greeks, Romans, and Chineſe, as have devoted themſelves to certain death, without any other motive than that of exchanging their life for the praiſes of poſterity. How ſtrange

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it is, that men who had no notion of a future ſtate, ſhould run to meet their deſtruction, in order to procure ſuch a happineſs?

This heroic principle, according to Cicero, flows from a ſecret hope that flatters us with the proſpect of enjoying reputation, which will even reach us when laid in the grave. A confuſed notion of immortality prevails even among thoſe who have not a clear idea of this truth. But there is ſtill another conſideration; it is very poſſible that theſe illuſtrious perſons may have been more happy in their death, than they would have been had they enjoyed life longer, as they were admired by their friends and countrymen, and perſuaded that they ſhould be ſo by their poſterity;

rity; nay even by their very enemies and all mankind is general: This croud of admirers, to a lively imagination, forms an object ſo delightful, that, though of ſhort duration, it appears more valuable than a long ſucceſſion of ſenſations, which, tho' agreeable, yet have an alloy of bitterneſs and chagrin.

Thoſe qualities which diſtinguiſh us from others, are not the only ones which flatter us; whatever ſhews the perfection of our ſpecies, makes a pleaſing impreſſion upon us.

The grandeur and variety of objects, as well as ſublimity of thought and ſentiment, ſeem to derive the greateſt part of their charms from the conviction they afford

afford us of the greatneſs of the human genius. And if the repreſentation of an object appears more pleaſing in a picture than it does in a pond, the reaſon ſeems to be, becauſe the image reflected in the water only flatters our ſight, whereas the art of painting or ſtatuary, breathing life, as it were, into the canvas or marble, contributes to heighten our vanity and ſelf-love, by a reflection which indeed ought rather to mortify us, when we conſider, what wonders one man does, which another is utterly incapable of.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the modifications of the brain, which go before, or accompany any agreeable ſenſations.

SO far I have endeavoured to find out the ſource of pleaſure in the ſoul, and the organs of ſenſation. According to their different modifications, there are always others in the brain, which are ſimilar and proportional to them, the traces of which are retained by the memory. Is there any poſſibility of unfolding this myſtery? For 'tis here eſpecially that nature ſeems to have covered herſelf with a veil, which mortals, I'm afraid, will never be able to remove. But if we cannot flatter ourſelves with the hopes

hopes of arriving at a true knowledge in this point; let us not however deſpair of gueſſing a little, ſince, when experience fails us, conjecture is always ready to aſſiſt us with her light.

We cannot obſerve Nature, without perceiving that a rich ſimplicity reigns through all her laws. We may form a notion then of the impreſſion which is made upon the brain, by that made upon the organs of the ſenſes, which are, as it were, the extenſions or branches of it. An object which is agreeable, exerciſes the fibres of the brain, without weakening or exhauſting them; on the other hand, whatever is diſpleaſing wounds them, and whatever is tireſome leaves them in a ſtate of inactivity.

It is not only from the degree of motion in the fibres of the brain that this pleaſure ſprings, but it chiefly ariſes from the relation which the motions imprinted there bear to each other. The theory of muſic teaches us, that the moſt pleaſing harmony is that, where the vibrations which compoſe it do moſt often unite: This has induced the greateſt natural philoſophers to believe, that thoſe colours, ſmells, and taſtes, which being mixed are agreeable, excite in the organs of ſight, ſmell, and taſte, certain vibrations which agree and correſpond with each other. Are we not therefore authoriſed to conjecture that ſymmetry, rhime, proportion, imitation, and that juſt relation of certain means to a determined end and

principal

pincipal object; in a word, the pleaſures which charm us moſt, either in the works of nature or art, make, at the ſame time, agreeable impreſſions on the brain, becauſe they produce ideas which are cloſely connected, and aſſiſt each other?

But whence comes it that we feel ſo grateful an impreſſion from thoſe qualities which conſtitute the beauty of the body, mind, or ſoul, when at the ſame time we do do not perceive their hidden relation to utility, which conſtitutes their real worth? The ſource of this pleaſure certainly flows from the wiſe contrivance of the author of nature, who has formed men in ſuch a manner, that notwithſtanding that ſelf-love which creates miſunder-

ſtandings amongſt them, yet they are members of the ſame body: Their happineſs as well as their misfortunes are common, unleſs obſtructed by their particular diſpoſitions. A perſon of a delicate conſtitution cannot behold another with a fractured limb, but he immediately feels the ſame part of his body affected with the wound inflicted on his neighbour; and tho' this impreſſion may not be ſo ſenſible in a robuſt man, yet, in ſome degree, he too will feel it.

Painful ſenſations are not the only ones which diffuſe themſelves by a ſort of contagion; ſince we find from experience, that a ſprightly humour and gaiety in our diſpoſition, will likewiſe communicate

itſelf

itſelf to thoſe who come into our company.

It is therefore evident, that the beauties of the body, the imagination, and the ſoul, make a pleaſing impreſſion on the ſpectator, becauſe they excite in his brain a motion which tends to communicate them to him, and will ſucceed too, if not oppoſed by particular diſpoſitions.

It has been ſaid, that geometry has the chief direction in the formation of the heavens; and we may ſay of harmony, that ſhe has been the principal directreſs in the conſtruction of our brain. What raptures, what agitations are not excited by certain tunes? How much are we inſpired with the love of dancing by muſic: How won-

wonderful is its power in the ſudden cure of certain diſtempers? This exerciſe of the fibres of the brain, which ſo nearly reſembles that of the chords of an inſtrument, plainly evinces that our brains are in reality a kind of inſtruments furniſhed with chords, compoſed of a number of nervous fibres, of different tenſions, and conſequently ſuſceptible of an infinite variety of vibrations. They communicate their motions by the aſſiſtance of the eyes and ears: This they do more eaſily, in proportion as they contain a greater number of chords which act in concert together, or as the chords of ſome are more ſtrong and able to move than thoſe of others.

There

There are ſouls which, at once, attract each other with greater force than the loadſtone does iron; and nothing can ſurpaſs that facility which thoſe who love each other have in communicating their ideas; their brains ſeem to be tuned in uniſon.

There are others to whom nature ſeems to have given a ſort of ſovereignty over the reſt of mankind; hence men of this claſs, ſometimes reduce men of the greateſt courage, as well as the moſt powerful princes, to the moſt abject ſtate of ſlavery. The Marchioneſs of Ancre, who was accuſed of magic, being aſked, What charm ſhe made uſe of to procure ſuch a power over the human fancy? I have never employed any other, anſwered ſhe to her judges, than

than that aſcendency which noble ſouls have over others. It was the force of this charm which enabled Mahomet and Cromwell, the one to overturn the conſtitution of Arabia, the other that of England, which they modelled anew at their pleaſure. Hiſtory informs us, that their dependents ſoon imbibed their ſentiments; the fibres of their brains, ſuſceptible of a ſimiliar and equally lively agitation, eaſily excited a ſimilar ſenſation in the brains of thoſe with whom they converſed.

But from what mechaniſm does it proceed, that the vibrations of the fibres of the brain have a power to tranſmit themſelves to that of another perſon? The ingenious hypotheſis of M. de Mairan, upon the

the communication of ſounds, throws ſome light upon this myſtery. Sound reaches us, becauſe there are certain fibres in ſonorous bodies, together with the parcels of air, the fibres of the ear, and laſtly, thoſe of the brain, which form a continued chain of chords, which communicate their motions to each other. Since the motions of the body, the colour of the face, and the diſpoſition of the eye, point out to others the particular ſtate of our ſoul, may we not, with ſome reaſon, conclude, that there is a chain, with chords in uniſon, which convey from one brain the vibrations of the fibres of another?

It is from this ſecret relation which the diſpoſitions of our brains have

have to each other, that ſympathy ariſes, and all our whimſical taſtes, which make us find out a particular pleaſure in certain objects, that others are quite ſtrangers to. What pleaſes us moſt, is not always what is moſt intitled to do ſo. Is a man ſeized with a deep melancholy? then he only loves dark and gloomy places where joy never approaches. No object makes a more pleaſing impreſſion, than that which excites in the fibres of the brain, ſuch vibrations as correſpond with thoſe of the ſoul: theſe are the ſenſations which yield her a peculiar ſatisfaction.

A new-born infant ſeems to be the moſt inſignificant creature in the whole univerſe; nevertheleſs it is the moſt charming of all objects to

thoſe who gave it birth. Yet this particular pleaſure is not attached to the identical perſon of the child. 'Tis only in poems and romances that we find inſtances of a diſcerning inſtinct of the parent; for, in reality, the moſt affectionate mother will hug as her own ſon, one who has been put in his place. It appears then, that the tenderneſs of parents derives its ſource from the peculiar formation of their brain, the ſtructure of which is ſo admirably contrived, that they cannot, without an extaſy of pleaſure, behold the fruit of their love, formed of their own ſubſtance, which will be to them a loving ſubject, whom nature has put under their laws, from whom, when worn out with age and infirmities, they have a

right

right to expect that ſuccour which they gave to its helpleſs infancy, who will inherit their name, their fortune, nay their very ideas and affections.

In order to finiſh this ſlight ſketch which we have given concerning the phyſical nature of ſenſations, we ſhall, at preſent, endeavour to trace out that particular part of the brain which is the ſeat of pleaſure and pain, which receives the impreſſions from neighbouring objects, and conſequently acts upon our organs: This part muſt have ſolidity and ſtrength, ſince the characters imprinted there cannot be worn out for a ſpace of years. This nervous membrane muſt hold and touch the extremity of every nerve pertaining to ſenſation, in order

order to receive all the different impreſſions of it. It muſt, at the ſame time, have a power over the origin of every nerve ſubſervient to motion, to be able to communicate ſuch motions as are ſuited to the vibrations which it feels. All theſe different marks ſeem to be united in the membrane called by anatomiſts *pia mater*, which, according to the expreſſion of M. Winſlow, includes the whole maſs of the brain, is ſtrongly adherent to it, and, by a quantity of foldings and duplicatures, produces a conſiderable number of many-folded waving partitions, which penetrate into all the adjacent parts, and make their way into all the different ſeats of the brain and *cerebellum*.

However, if it was true, that it ſometimes happened that a retrenchment of a conſiderable portion of the *pia mater* did not in the leaſt prejudice the faculties of ſenſation, we ſhould then have reaſon to conclude, that this nervous membrane is not what we inquire after. But however it is, we cannot, unleſs by ſome very unfortunate accident, come to a certain light in this point.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the relation which the laws of ſenſation have to our preſervation.

ALL agreeable ſenſations may be reduced to two different claſſes.

One conſiſts of the bounties of nature, which convey pleaſing ſenſations, antecedent to all reflection: among which may be accounted, not only the pleaſures of the ſenſes, but likewiſe the moſt of thoſe of the imagination, as well as of the heart; the beauty of the body, the mind, and the ſoul, and all that variety of agreeable objects which ſhine throughout the works of nature and art. They are joined to

whatever exercises the organs of our faculties without fatiguing them. It is to these organs that we are indebted every moment for our preservation; and it is of the utmost importance to us, that pleasure should distinguish whatever tends to promote this exercise of the fibres, and the motion of the fluids.

The other class is made up of those sensations which arise from our manner of thinking, and cease upon the change of our ideas. One man aspires at independency; another consents to obey, because, by this means, he expects to arrive at command: one person takes a pleasure in hoarding up riches, which become useless to him, whilst

whilſt another loves to ſquander away the eſtate which was neceſſary to ſupport him in life. This influence which our thoughts have over our pleaſures, is the chief characteriſtic of the human ſpecies.

At our firſt ſetting out in life, we are generally bent on the purſuit of the particular ſenſations which are agreeable to us; but, in a little time, being inſtructed by experience, we find that there are pleaſures which follow pain, as well as pains which follow the train of pleaſure: this makes us aſpire at having ſenſations truly valuable, and acquiring qualities which we eſteem moſt. Thus we form ideas of happineſs and perfection, which make us blind to every other advantage. The fa-

culty which we poſſeſs of applying theſe two important ideas to various objects, proves often deſtructive to us; yet it would have been doing a ſignal prejudice to man, to have made him inſenſible to the impreſſions which they make upon him. They comfort us in our misfortunes; they inſpire us with reſolution to encounter our difficulties; and they ſtrew flowers in the paths which they invite us to purſue. To them we are indebted for our pureſt pleaſures, all that contributes to the glory and happineſs of ſociety, the arts and ſciences, and all the virtues, nay, even our very preſervation. Other animals need only to lay hold of the nouriſhment which is offered them; but man grows up in the moſt

moſt exceſſive indigence, without raiment, without ſhelter, and almoſt without any other nouriſhment, than what is the fruit of his labour. The ſureſt reſource which he has, is by reflecting on the time paſt, to be able to make proviſion for futurity. The ideas of perfection and happineſs are the ſprings which move him to this neceſſary foreſight, and conſequently employ all his different faculties.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Where the reaſon is inquired into, why the laws of ſenſation being the ſame in all men, there ſhould yet be ſuch a difference in taſtes.

AFTER having attempted to explain the laws of ſenſation, let us now take notice of ſomething pretty ſingular, that is, the diverſity of taſtes, which nevertheleſs all flow from the ſame ſource. We may venture to ſay, that the nothern and ſouthern nations, thoſe who are but ſeparated by an arm of the ſea, or by a ridge of mountains, nay, men born in the ſame family, will have quite different pleaſures: What, in ſome,

will

will be pleaſing to their eyes, ears, and mind, the very ſame will be to others a puniſhment.

The diverſity of the organs is the principal cauſe of this: Thus it is, that an eye of tender and delicate fibres, will love violet rather than orange colour; becauſe, as it has been made evident by the experiments of Sir Iſaac Newton, the violet is a colour made up of weaker rays: on the other hand, the orange will be preferred by thoſe who have the fibres of the eye of a more ſtrong and ſolid make.

Sounds that are offenſive to a delicate people, are not ſo to a rougher nation; a man whom Petrarch mentions, was not ſo much charmed with the melody of night-

nightingales, as he was with the croaking of a parcel of frogs. The fibres of his ear were certainly ſo cloſely joined, that a ſucceſſion of harſh ſounds could move without fatiguing them.

Nature has perhaps more diverſified our brains than the organs of our ſenſes. What a difference is there betwixt the heat of an Indian head, and the coldneſs of a frozen Laplander's? An object cannot make the ſame impreſſion on ſuch different ſubſtances. Thus among the people of the ſouth, a declamation, to be agreeable, ought to be more animated than amongſt the northern nations, becauſe it muſt be ſuited to a more lively ſenſation.

The bounds or extent of our knowledge are likewiſe other cauſes for the ſtrangeneſs of our taſtes.

Some are only ſtruck with the beauties which really exiſt in an object, whilſt others only yield to the impreſſion made by the privation of ſome beauties in it.

The Egyptians chiefly admired grandeur in their works of architecture; the Goths were fond of variety. Our great architects have rejected neither of theſe beauties, but they have had the art of joining them both together, and forming an agreeable proportion.

As it is with architecture, ſo it is likewiſe with muſic: ſome regard only bold and lofty pieces of muſic; others again are moſt pleaſed with an exact imitation of nature.

ture. But a great muſician admits both ſorts into his compoſition; he has the art of giving ſuch a proper ſoftneſs to the moſt jarring ſounds, as to make them produce the fineſt harmony: but what he chiefly aims at, is to raiſe ſenſations; and he thinks he has not arrived at the perfection of his art, till he knows how to maſter the ſoul, as well as flatter the ear.

Happy are thoſe nations, where men of ſuch ſurpriſing abilities ſtart up, who can diſcern and make uſe of all theſe different ſorts of beauties, and unite them together in a juſt proportion! We may ſay that Nature, with a ſcanty hand, has ſown ſuch geniuſes, at a remote diſtance from each other, in the courſe of ages. Their works, which

are

are founded upon the fineſt taſte, likewiſe infuſe the ſame delicacy into a whole people: They become the ſtandards of compariſon, and it often happens that an object which before attracted our admiration, loſes all its charms, and grows inſipid, according to the Italian proverb, That the greateſt enemy to any thing that is good, is what is beſt. Bring ſome tepid water to two men, one of whom we ſhall ſuppoſe to be full of heat, and the other pinched with cold, the ſame water will appear warm to the one and cold to the other; the laws of ſenſation are the ſame in both, but the ſtandard of their compariſon is different: one forms his judgment of the quality of the

water from the cold in his hand, the other from the heat of his.

In the thirteenth century, the arts and ſciences were buried in obſcurity over all Europe. The magiſtrates of Florence, as Vaſari* informs us, entered into a ſcheme, wherein they ſpared no expence to bring from the moſt diſtant parts of Greece the moſt eminent painters, whoſe works were then eſteemed the capital pieces of this art. Cimabuè became their diſciple, and collected all the fragments which were to be found of Parrhaſius and Apelles. He ſoon became ſuperior to his maſters, and entirely eclipſed them. We ſee by le Dante ‡, that he was then

* Tom. 1. p. 2. ‡ 11° Cant del purgat.

thought

thought to be arrived at the height of this art. But Giotto, who was Cimabuè's ſcholar, gave ſhining proofs, that a much greater perfection could be arrived at than his maſter had attained, and accordingly his works were univerſally admired as the moſt perfect. † Petrarch, ‡ le Dante, and his ancient commentator, are famous evidences in this point. Michael Angelo and Raphael have likewiſe ſurpaſſed Cimabuè and Giotto; but we have reaſon to believe, that we are indebted to theſe two firſt artiſts for their illuſtrious ſucceſſors.

Let us not ſhew too great a contempt of the Chineſe or Indian

† Teſtament, and the fifth Book of his letters. ‡ The 11th Canto of his purgat.

painters. Paintings more imperfect than theirs are, would very probably have been much admired by us, if, by a lucky chance, there had not ſprung up a ſet of magiſtrates in Florence, who were capable of forming a grand deſign, while, at the ſame juncture, there were artiſts of ſuch abilities as enabled them to turn to their advantage the encouragement which was offered to them.

Scripture-pieces, however coarſe and unpoliſhed they might be, yet they charmed our anceſtors who had ſeen nothing better. At that time the Chineſe might have reproached them for their want of taſte; and perhaps, with the ſame juſtice too, they might have ridiculed thoſe who were the admirers

of

of de Lope, de Vegue, and Shakeſpear. But as long as the Chineſe, the Spaniards, and the Engliſh, are touched with admiration, when they behold on their theatre great and noble ſentiments, when the dialogues in the ſcenes are properly adapted to the characters, and the paſſions of the ſoul are expreſſed in a ſtrong and lively manner; ſo long as they have a taſte for the beauties of Sophocles, and the excellencies of the truly great dramatic poets among the ancients and moderns, ſo long will it give them pain to behold thoſe faulty repreſentations, where the great beauties of the recital are diſfigured by the irregularity of the whole, of which they are only a part.

The diſpoſitions of the heart are likewiſe able to raiſe a difference in our taſtes. Envy, that gloomy lover of the dead, hates the living, and makes artiſts depreciate each other. On the other hand, if the rival is not cotemporary, or of the ſame country with us, then he eſcapes the darts of envy; we love then to give him the higheſt degree of perfection, and we hope to ſhare with him thoſe laurels which we beſtow upon him.

Ambition likewiſe is ſometimes concerned in deciding the glory of artiſts, as well as that of their works. The Romans eſteemed only thoſe talents which might enable them to be leaders in the commonwealth, or to triumph over the

the neighbouring nations *. So that thoſe ſame pictures and ſtatues which ſtruck a Grecian with admiration, appeared to a Roman quite low and inſignificant: ſuch is the effect of thoſe paſſions which poſſeſs the ſoul, that they throw an air of uglineſs and deformity upon whatever is not ſuited to the end which they purſue.

Sometimes too it happens, that our religious principles have an influence over our taſte; a pious Muſſulman looks upon the moſt perfect ſtatues to be ſo many dangerous idols.

* Cicero, 6 ver.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The laws of ſenſation are the work of a bountiful and intelligent power.

ASSOON as mankind came to a knowledge in anatomy, they perceived that the ſize and ſtrength of each muſcle was in proportion to that of the bone, to which it was joined. Some anatomiſts being ſtruck with this beautiful proportion, have urged againſt the Epicureans, that if, according to their ſuppoſition, a blind power had formed the moving ſtructure of animal bodies, ſuch a power as this could never have ſo curiouſly ſuited to the weight of each bone, the ſtrength of the muſcle

muſcle deſigned to move and ſupport it. The Epicureans, in anſwer to this, ſay, that theſe muſcles were not different in their nature, and that thoſe which had the moſt exerciſe, became the moſt brawny, in the ſame manner as thoſe men who undergo moſt labour, are generally moſt robuſt. This is the low refuge of atheiſm, and the only one too. Galen *, with great eaſe, ſhewed the falſity of it. He made it evident that infants, taken out of the mother's womb, had theſe proportions diſcernable in them, as well as in the moſt active wreſtlers.

The different ſorts of agreeable ſenſations, furniſh us likewiſe with a proof for the being of a Diety.

* Galen. De uſu partium.

They

They are diſtinguiſhed by natural characters, to impute the cauſe of which to a blind chance, would be the higheſt abſurdity.

How comes it that, in the productions of art, the relation which all the parts bear to the principal end, gives us no pleaſure till we are fitted for it by inſtruction; while, at the ſame time, by a ſecret charm, which is prior to all our reflections, we are at once made ſenſible of the beauty in the ſtructure of man, animals, and plants? Can we believe that the Author of nature is himſelf ignorant of what he reveals to us? Can we deny intelligence to the creator of the univerſe, who has ſurrounded us with ſuch a number of agreeable beauties, which are as ſo many characters

racters engraved by his bountiful hand, and ſerve to mark out to us that ſecret relation which is kept up betwixt man, and all the other parts of the creation.

Theſe characters are more or leſs diſtinguiſhed, according to the importance of what they declare to us. Among all the objects which are preſented to our ſenſes, there are none which make a more agreeable impreſſion than a fine face. But the moſt exact and regular features do not touch us ſo much as the beauties of a fine genius; whilſt theſe again are greatly eclipſed by the ſuperior ſplendor of noble ſentiments and actions, which diſcover a greatneſs of ſoul and height of courage.

The

The beauty of the body has the advantage of being always before our eyes, whilſt that of the mind and ſoul does not ſhew itſelf but at particular times. But whenever theſe different objects are preſented to us, and paſſion does not hinder us from a proper view of them, then the pleaſure ariſing from them, will be according to that diſpoſition and order which I have taken notice of. And thus it is, that experience confirms what nature teaches us; that the beauty of a ſprightly wit intitles us more to happineſs than that of the body, while, at the ſame time, it is greatly inferior to that of the ſoul. Sometimes it happens, by our particular diſpoſitions, that the beauty

of

of the body makes a more lively impreſſion upon us, than that of the mind or ſoul; then it becomes an allurement which invites us to procure a ſort of immortality: the Author of nature looked upon the preſervation of our ſpecies to be an object more worthy of his care, than the perſonal advantage of any individual.

That ſame wiſdom which has thus diſtinguiſhed the beauty of the body, the imagination, and the ſoul, has likewiſe diverſified their motions; thoſe of the imagination being more agreeable than thoſe of the body, while, on the other hand, they are greatly inferior to thoſe of the ſoul.

Beſides, there is ſtill another difference in our pleaſures, which

proclaims aloud that there is an intelligent power. Agreeable ſmells, noble pieces of architecture, the charms of painting, oratory, muſic, geometry, hiſtory, and the pleaſures of a ſelect company; all theſe are of ſuch a nature, that the enjoyment of them gives us pleaſure, while, at the ſame time, the being deprived of them cauſes no real pain. They are not ſupplies to our neceſſary wants, they are only graceful ornaments, which ſerve to enrich and increaſe our happineſs. What number of people are utter ſtrangers to them, and yet enjoy a life of tranquillity? Even thoſe who are moſt ſenſible of theſe pleaſures can part with them for others. 'Tis not ſo with other ſorts of agreeable ſenſations.

Thus,

Thus, for inſtance, the law of nature, which invites us to nouriſh ourſelves, does not only reward us for our compliance, but likewiſe puniſhes us if we do not obey her call. The author of nature has not thought it ſufficient to entice us, by a particular pleaſure, to be careful of our preſervation; but, at the ſame time, he incites us by a more powerful motive, which is pain.

His bountiful care is manifeſt, even in the different duration of theſe various ſenſations: Thoſe which affect our ſight, our hearing, the imagination, or the heart, as well as thoſe which accompany a moderate exerciſe, ſeem to be always before us; they fill up life, without being prejudicial to health. It is not the ſame with that plea-

ſure which is annexed to nouriſhment. Had it gone farther than the ſatisfying nature, then an immoderate uſe of the moſt wholeſome food, might have become the moſt deadly poiſon.

Among all pleaſures, there are none more remarkable than that of a new-born infant. How is it to be ſucceſsfully nouriſhed? In vain would nature have furniſhed the mother's breaſt with proper nouriſhment, had ſhe not, at the ſame time, enabled the child to extract this uſeful liquor? The infant, as yet incapable of any other exerciſe of its faculties, pleaſes itſelf with moving its lips and cheeks, in ſuch a manner that it affords a paſſage into the mouth for the milk when offered. The pleaſant taſte of this

nouriſhment

nouriſhment becomes a new motive to make it repeat theſe motions. It paſſes away the beginning of life either in ſleep, or in the enjoyment of the only pleaſures which it can feel; ſo that this infirm being, which at firſt ſight might ſeem to be in a ſtate of miſery, in reality lives amidſt a ſucceſſion of agreeable ſenſations.

The ſame Being who is the author of our happineſs, is likewiſe of our pains. Upon this account ſome philoſophers have arrogantly preſumed to deny his intelligence, and debaſed him into blind chance. Among theſe Mr. Bayle has been a remarkable champion, the ſum of whoſe doctrine is as follows.

" If a ſovereign and intelligent " Being had eſtabliſhed the laws

" of ſenſation, then ſurely he " would have enriched his crea- " tures with all the happineſs " which they were capable of. " He would have excluded from " the univerſe all painful ſenſa- " tions, eſpecially thoſe which can " be no ways ſerviceable. To " what purpoſe ſerve the pains of " a man groaning under an incur- " able diſtemper, or what end can " be anſwered by the agonies of a " woman in labour in a deſart?"

This is the famous objection advanced by Mr Bayle, which he has dwelt ſo long upon in his writings, and has repeated again and again in a thouſand different ſhapes; and tho' it has been urged ever ſince pain has been known in the world, yet he has had the art of

arming

arming it with ſo many ſhining compariſons, that philoſophers and divines have been frightened as at ſomething new and terrible. Some have called in metaphyſics to their aid; whilſt others have had recourſe to the ſpaciouſneſs of the heavens; and in order to comfort us in our afflictions, they have ſet before us an infinite variety of worlds peopled by happy inhabitants. I ſhall not here make uſe of any new hypotheſis, but ſhall confine myſelf to the objection itſelf; and, even from this, endeavour to draw out a proof of the very doctrine which it oppoſes: nor ſhall I bring in any deep or abſtruſe reflections, but ſuch as may occur to the ſlighteſt attention.

The

The greateſt part of philoſophers, inſtead of taking their ideas of beings from their nature, have formed their notions of them from their own ideas. Seated in their cloſets they have ſearched into the hidden receſſes of nature, and, in ſome ſort, reſembling Cervantes's hero, mounted upon a wooden horſe, with their eyes bound up: in this manner they have traverſed the whoſe univerſe, determining the nature of all beings, and aſſigning to each of them their particular functions.

This has been the ſort of philoſophy which Mr Bayle has fallen into: he has wreſted the meaning of certain theological expreſſions, in order to make it appear, that there can be no other power in God,

God, but that of making all his creatures perfectly happy; thus having framed an idol which nature as well as religion diſclaims, it then became an eaſy matter for him to deſtroy the work of his hands. Natural theology is a branch of phyſics. If then we have a mind to guard ourſelves from this deceitful illuſion, let us follow the method which is ſucceſsfully made uſe of in ſciences of the ſame kind. Let us make obſervations and inquiries into nature, and ſo frame our ideas according to the diſcoveries which we make. Let this be the thread which may guide us in our reſearches, and, where this fails, there let us ſtop.

In relation to the author of the laws of ſenſation, two queſtions, and

and theſe very different too, may be aſked: Is he intelligent? Is he beneficent? Now if we do not conſider theſe two points diſtinctly and ſeparately, or if we deny him to be an intelligent Being, becauſe he may not have been beneficent in proportion to our deſires, this would be offering a violence to the firſt laws of the art of thinking. Let us not then confound theſe two queſtions together, but examine them apart; and ſo we ſhall endeavour to clear up the firſt.

We know by experience that there are blind cauſes, that is to ſay, ſuch as have no deſign, and there are likewiſe intelligent cauſes, which purſue an ultimate end thro' all the different parts of their works. We may diſtinguiſh them by

by the nature of their productions, ſince the exact relation which all the parts bear to the principal end, is the characteriſtic of an intelligent cauſe. This juſt relation ſhines conſpicuous through all the laws of ſenſation. Pleaſure and pain equally contribute to maintain our preſervation; the one ſerves to point out to us what is moſt agreeable to our nature, whilſt the other makes us know what is prejudicial to us. There is a certain pleaſing impreſſion, which marks out ſuch foods as are proper to be changed into our ſubſtance; whilſt hunger and thirſt put us in mind that perſpiration and exerciſe make a conſiderable waſte in our bodies, and how dangerous it would be to delay long the reparation of this loſs.

loſs. Let us ſuppoſe, for a moment, that we had no painful ſenſation to give us notice of our preſent or future evils; we ſhould then perceive, that the want of this pain would ſoon make way for death, who would arm himſelf for the deſtruction of all ſorts of animals, and for this end would make uſe of pain as well as pleaſure indiſcriminately.

There are nerves extended thro' the whole of our body, which ſerve to inform us what is good, and what is hurtful to us. The painful ſenſation is in proportion to the force of what hurts the nerves; ſo that, according to the greatneſs of the evil, we make ſo much the more haſte to remove the cauſe, and ſeek the remedy.

It

It ſometimes happens that pain does not precede our evils, but at once advances upon us with our ruin; nothing then which ſurrounds us can retard their approach. It is with the laws of ſenſation as with thoſe of motion. The laws of motion regulate the ſucceſſion of thoſe changes which happen in bodies, and ſometimes bring rain upon rocks or barren lands: in the ſame manner, the laws of ſenſation regulate the ſucceſſion of changes which happen in animated beings; and thoſe pains which appear to us of no uſe, are oftentimes neceſſary conſequences which flow from the circumſtances of our ſituation. But tho' theſe different laws may, in ſome particulars, appear to be of no uſe, yet this is a

leſs inconveniency than it would be to ſuppoſe them continually liable to change, ſince this allows no fixed principle capable of ſuperintending the management of men or animals.

The deſign of theſe general laws is not to make all the individuals immortal; 'tis only to preſerve the different ſpecies. Now it is evident, that the laws of ſenſation, as well as motion, are perfectly calculated for this preſervation. Thoſe of motion, at all ſeaſons, and in all places, furniſh the various ſorts of animals with whatever is uſeful or neceſſary for them. Thoſe of ſenſation point out to them whatever is agreeable to their nature, and invite them to look out for ſuch; while, at the ſame time, they inſtruct

ſtruct them in whatever is prejudicial, and oblige them to remove and keep at a diſtance every thing of this ſort.

What depth of underſtanding muſt there be in the Author of nature, who, in a manner ſo ſimple, yet ſo full of variety, continually changes the ſcene of the univerſe, yet, in general, preſerves it the ſame!

The laws of ſenſation not only conſpire with the works of the whole univerſe in proclaiming that there is an intelligent cauſe; but what's more, I affirm that they likewiſe prove to us the beneficence of this great governor of the world.

His bounty is made manifeſt by the care which he has taken; not

only to provide for us what is neceſſary, but likewiſe what is convenient and agreeable; and this care of his ſhines forth in all the laws of ſenſation.

When my hand is benumbed with cold, and I happen to put it too near the fire, the exquiſite pain which I feel, makes me draw it back immediately. In like manner, I am every hour indebted to ſuch friendly alarms, for the preſervation of ſome part or other of me.

But if I approach the fire at a moderate diſtance, then I feel an agreeable warmth; and we may obſerve, that, in ſuch impreſſions of objects, or exerciſes of our different faculties as are in any degree ſuited to prolong our exiſtence, or raiſe our perfection, the Crea-

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tor has beſtowed pleaſure with an open hand. To ſtrengthen this obſervation, I appeal to thoſe pleaſing ſenſations which flow from painting, ſculpture, architecture, and all the objects of ſight. It is the ſame with muſic, dancing, poetry, eloquence, hiſtory, geometry, as well as all the ſciences, the diverſions, and employments of life; ſo it is too in the friendſhip, affection, and in ſhort all the motions of the body, mind, and heart. Such is the extenſive goodneſs of the Deity, that he ſeems to have been liberal, nay profuſe of all thoſe pleaſures and agreeable ſenſations which were conſiſtent with his divine wiſdom.

I ſhall not here ſpend any time to confute that tenet of the Manicheans, who held that there are two deities, one of whom diſtributed pleaſure, and the other pain. Mr Bayle ſeems only to have revived this doctrine, which has been exploded for ſo many ages; and to have made uſe of this ſyſtem, as, in battle, a decayed houſe may ſerve for a ſhelter for a few minutes. He had not a ſufficient turn for ſuperſtition, to make him believe two Deities. But however it may be, I ſhall only obſerve, that ſince the diſtribution of pleaſure and pain equally anſwers the ſame unity of deſign, for this reaſon it is no proof of two intelligences neceſſarily at variance with each other.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the pleaſures which accompany our performance of the duties we owe to God.

IT has been ſaid of Admiration, that ſhe was the daughter of Ignorance; but when we ſurvey the works of nature, and behold ſuch marks of art and dexterity, we cannot help being filled with admiration, which generally riſes in proportion to our knowledge.

A Deity ſo infinitely intelligent ought to attract our admiration; a being of ſuch unbounded goodneſs ought ſurely to raiſe in us gratitude, and engage our confidence and eſteem.

Epicurus,

Epicurus, by endeavouring to confute the exiſtence of a God, thought he did well in attempting to diſprove a power that ſeemed to be a enemy to our happineſs. But why ſhould we form this falſe idea of a being, who has not only given us different taſtes, but at the ſame time ſurrounded us on all ſides with agreeable ſenſations; who has not only furniſhed us with variety of faculties, but has likewiſe contrived them in ſuch a manner, that the exerciſe of all of them is accompanied with a pleaſure which tends to our preſervation? Are the goods offered to us to be leſs eſteemed, becauſe they are the preſents of a ſupreme and intelligent being? Ought they not to be accounted rather more valuable, ſince they are the pledges of

of his goodneſs towards us? In ſhort, when we conſider the power, the wiſdom, and goodneſs of God, ought we not patiently to ſubmit to the afflictions with which he viſits us, and contentedly to bear the loſs of bleſſings which he thinks proper to deprive us of: nor ought we to murmur againſt the laws which he has preſcribed to us.

Shall we pretend to rebel againſt a power that's infinite? No, let us not heighten our misfortunes by exerting our utmoſt but vain efforts againſt the hand of omnipotence.

We are placed in the univerſe, as in the garden of our firſt parents; and if we are forbid the uſe of one particular fruit, nevertheleſs let us with gratitude accept of others, which, of themſelves, invite us to par-

partake of them. Let us enjoy what is offered us, without thinking ourſelves unfortunate by what is refuſed. Deſire is fed by hope, but dies when there is no poſſibility of attaining to its object. Is there any man in Europe who can be ſo unreaſonable as to complain that he has not been ſeated on the throne of the Mogul? Let us not torment ourſelves with fruitleſs deſires, nor be uneaſy, or out of humour about the want of any thing which is not a part of the happineſs deſtined for us; let us look upon the acquiſition of ſuch to be as impoſſible to be obtained as the kingdom of Aſia. If we ſubmit ourſelves with humility to the almighty power of our Creator, then we have the inward ſatisfaction to know, that,

that, if we were admitted into his councils, we ſhould applaud the motives of his laws, and be highly delighted with the reaſons of his conduct.

The univerſe ſeems to Epicurus and Spinoſa to be nothing but a motley aſſemblage of works proceeding from a blind cauſe; but to men of virtue it is a magnificent temple, inhabited by a beneficent Deity, who has communicated to them a part of his deſign, and has diſplayed to them the wonderful works of his wiſdom; who profuſely beſtows upon them whatever is neceſſary, uſeful, or agreeable; and to all the bleſſings which he has beſtowed upon them, he has likewiſe added the proſpect of a happineſs as laſting as himſelf.

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Let us by no means wiſh then to throw off the duties which we owe to God: pleaſure accompanies them; pleaſure, I ſay, which is inſeparably connected with every motion of admiration, gratitude, hope, or love, and, in this caſe, becomes ſtill greater, becauſe it is founded upon the moſt juſt and reaſonable grounds.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of the pleaſure which accompanies the performance of our duties towards ourſelves.

THE duties preſcribed by moral philoſophy in regard to ourſelves, may be reduced to theſe, to know how to ſet a juſt eſteem upon the goods which are offered to us, and to bear our misfortunes with reſolution.

There was a ſect of philoſophers who ſeemed to have an intention to extirpate all pleaſures. Their ſchools reſounded nothing elſe but this auſtere leſſon, Abſtain from pleaſures. But why ſo? ſince Neceſſity herſelf, in a manner, obliges us to enjoy them,

either when we quench our thirſt, or ſatisfy our hunger, or when we open our eyes or ears. We cannot help feeling pleaſure in our employments, as well as amuſements; in ſolitude, as well as ſociety. Are we then to deſpiſe theſe bleſſings which are ſo connected with life? ought we not rather, with grateful hearts, to rejoice in the poſſeſſion of them?

But farther, I affirm, that pleaſure ſprings from the boſom of virtue. An inward ſatisfaction never fails to accompany every employment that's ſuited to our abilities and condition. Relaxations are moſt agreeable, when they are procured by labour, and uſed with ſuch moderation as not to create diſguſt. Among all the deſcriptions

tions preſented to us by hiſtory or tragedy, there are none more delightful than thoſe in which the beauty of the ſoul ſhines forth with all its luſtre. A friendſhip that ariſes from virtue, will excite the moſt exquiſite pleaſures; and amidſt all the pleaſing advantages which proceed from a friendly affection, there can be none of a higher degree than that which makes us fix our eſteem upon the moſt deſerving qualities of the perſon who is the object of our love, which reconciles our taſtes, unites our views, and renders our intereſts mutual.

Virtue is far from excluding agreeable pleaſures; ſhe only takes pains to give the preference to thoſe which are moſt worthy of it. Here a queſtion of no ſmall importance

occurs to us, a queſtion which, long before the time of Epicurus or Plato, divided mankind into two different ſects, Whether the pleaſures of the ſenſes be ſuperior to thoſe of the ſoul?

In order to determine this point, let us ſuppoſe them ſeparated from each other, and thus carried to the utmoſt ſummit of their perfection. Let us ſuppoſe, that a being inſenſible of the pleaſures of the mind, ſhould taſte thoſe of the body throughout its whole duration; and being deſtitute of all knowledge, remember nothing of thoſe pleaſures which it has felt, nor foreſee any which it is to enjoy: thus being ſhut up as it were in its ſhell, all its happineſs conſiſts in a ſort of deaf and blind ſenſation, which affects it only

only for the preſent moment. On the other hand, let us ſuppoſe that a man is inſenſible to all the pleaſures of the ſenſes, while at the ſame time he enjoys all thoſe of the mind and heart; that, in a life of ſolitude, hiſtory, geometry, and the polite arts, exhibit to his ſight all the richneſs of their treaſures, and, while he is in this retirement, continually give him freſh proofs of the force and extent of his mind: or, if he lives in ſociety, that friendſhip and glory, the natural concomitants of virtue, continually furniſh him with new inſtances of the grandeur and beauty of his ſoul, and by his ſtrict adherence to the dictates of reaſon, that a ſecret ſatisfaction always reigns in his heart, which nothing can

diſturb. Methinks there would be but very few men who have any notion of the pleaſures of the mind and body, who, if they had theſe two different ſorts of happineſs placed before them, would, to uſe Socrates's expreſſion, prefer the ſtate of an oyſter to that of a divinity.

The pleaſures of the body are moſt lively when they are the remedies of pain. Is it not the degree of thirſt which determines the degree of pleaſure we feel in quenching it? Socrates, who in his compariſons conſiders more the truth of the reſemblance, than the majeſty of the image, compares theſe ſenſations to that of ſcratching any part which itches: an uneaſineſs goes before and accompanies

nies them, and as ſoon as the pain vaniſhes, the pleaſure is alſo annihilated; whereas moſt of the pleaſures of the mind and ſoul are not adulterated by this impure mixture of pain.

Beſides, all that's exquiſite in ſenſual pleaſure, is derived from the mind or ſoul; without their aſſiſtance, it ſoon cloys and grows inſipid.

In fine, the pleaſures of the body have nothing of duration, but in proportion as they borrow it from our wants; and as ſoon as they are ſupplied, they become principles of pain. The pleaſures of the mind and ſoul are then greatly ſuperior, had they even no other advantage than that of being better

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ſuited to fill up the void ſpaces of life.

But among all the different ſorts of pleaſures, whether they be of the mind or heart, to which muſt we give the preference? It appears to me, that the teſtimonies of all men concur in giving the pre-eminence to thoſe which flatter moſt our ſelf-love. Whence comes it, that we are more offended at contempt than hatred? 'Tis becauſe it gives us more pain to have our perfections called in queſtion, than to be threatened with the loſs of any other poſſeſſion.

A comic writer among the Greeks has obſerved, that the proper meaſures for ſecuring a priſoner were generally not followed: Why,

Why, ſaid he, might we not allow pleaſure to guard him? Why do we not bind him in her fetters? Plautus and Arioſto have adopted this piece of pleaſantry. But thoſe poets muſt ſurely have had a very ſuperficial knowledge of the human heart, if they really believed that their captive would not have broken his chains. In order to effect this, there would have been no occaſion to diſplay to his ſight the whole luſtre of glory; for as ſoon as he found himſelf to appear deſpicable in his priſon, as ſoon as he found himſelf liable to the contempt of others, then he would have been alarmed, and would have endeavoured to throw off his yoke, and prefer honourable danger to ſhameful pleaſure. For the truth

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of this aſſertion, we may appeal to the daily inſtances to be met with throughout all Europe. What numbers of men have there been, who, when rioting in the midſt of pleaſure, have abandoned this life of eaſe, and choſe rather to live in dangers, and undergo all the fatigues of war? Glory has more attractive charms than pleaſure; and mankind, in general, fear pain and death leſs than contempt.

It is this idea of perfection, which for above two thouſand years has rendered the Indians inſenſible to the horror of burning themſelves alive; it is this which has hurried men headlong into the jaws of death, being charmed with the proſpect of gaining immortal fame by

by this piece of heroiſm. 'Tis a ſort of idol, to which, in order to wipe off an affront received, we oftentimes ſacrifice our country, our repoſe, the higheſt employments, and oftentimes life itſelf. In fine, love itſelf, which ſeems to depend entirely upon the ſenſes, is yet indebted to the ideas of fancy for its moſt refined pleaſures.

All thoſe things which agreeably flatter us are not equally valuable. To aim at gaining the eſteem of others, without having our own inward approbation, is, in reality, the ſame thing as if it were to be contented with being ſick, provided only we had the outward appearance of being in health. Nature has not truſted it to reaſon alone to declare to us this important

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ant truth; and tho' ſhe has annexed a particular pleaſure ariſing from the marks which others give us of their eſteem, yet ſhe has, at the ſame time, fixed a blemiſh on thoſe who claim public praiſe as their due. Does ſhe not ſeem here to be a little contradictory to herſelf? For why ſhould ſhe make it diſgraceful to require eſteem, while, at the ſame time, ſhe ſeems to prompt us to ſeek for it by the pleaſure which attends it? In this let us not blame the conduct of nature, but rather admire her wiſdom; ſhe informs us by the voice of our inward reflection, that public eſteem is a ſort of recompence due to virtue, but that it ought not to be the motive. To be over-fond of the eſteem of others, is, in effect, a kind

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of proof that we have not our own inward eſteem. Let us then firſt ſeek the approbation of an upright conſcience, which hatred or calumny cannot deprive us of, which will be ſome time or other followed by the eſteem of others, and is always accompanied with the approbation of God himſelf.

Let us not allow ourſelves to be dazzled by the flattery of a falſe judgment. Behold that man who appears ſo melancholy and dejected; he imagined that grandeur conſiſted in a numerous train of attendants; by this means he thought his being was aggrandized. A reverſe of fortune forced him to retrench half his retinue: he is inſenſible to all other happineſs which remains, and is become perfectly

miſerable by the loſs of what was really uſeleſs to him. Turn your eyes to that other perſon, who poſſeſſes ſo much wealth, and is arrived to ſuch a pitch of grandeur; yet ſee what a fit of frenzy and deſpair has ſeized him: This man meaſured his happineſs by the tenderneſs of a wife, or perhaps by the favour of his prince; his darling pleaſure has been ſnatched from him, the loſs of which has made ſuch a chaſm in his heart, that the horror of it has tainted all the other bleſſings which ſurround him.

It is true that theſe phantoms of perfection, proceeding from an imagination tranſported either by ambition or love, may ſometimes produce a tranſitory pleaſure more lively

lively than that ſoft and durable joy which accompanies reaſon; but this fleeting ſenſation is of the ſame nature with that which makes drinking more agreeable in a fever than in health: it ſuppoſes a diſtemper in the ſoul, from whence ariſes an uneaſineſs in the purſuit of the object of deſire, diſguſt in the enjoyment, and deſpair in the privation.

'Tis not only in the external teſtimonies of perfection that we find a ſort of happineſs, ſince it alſo conſiſts in the conſciouſneſs of poſſeſſing it.

But amidſt all theſe agreeable enjoyments which offer themſelves, are we entirely to give up ourſelves to thoſe which are attended with the greateſt pleaſure? No. The ſame ſenſations too often

repeated, will ſoon blunt the ſenſitive faculty; loathing and diſtaſte will iſſue forth from the very boſom of pleaſure; ſo that what a little before gave us the moſt exſtatic joy, will become the object of our averſion. How then are we to defend ourſelves againſt ſuch formidable enemies? We can do it in no other way but by diffuſing a variety thro' all that employs our faculties; for this will give an air of novelty to the objects of our taſte. The pleaſures of the mind and thoſe of the body, reſt and motion, ſolitude and company, relaxations and ſerious employments, all theſe acquire new charms by ſucceeding each other; and their variety produces the ſame effect in life, as the difference of concords in harmony.

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In our different faculties we have a hidden ſtore of valuable ſeeds, which become dead if not properly nouriſhed, but they ſpring up and flouriſh, if aſſiſted by the culture of arts and ſciences. The more theſe are brought to light, the more we are furniſhed with preſervatives againſt the aſſaults of our paſſions, as well as expedients to make life agreeable.

A certain great poet, by way of allegory, has told us that Jupiter had opened at the foot of his throne two fountains, the one of pleaſure, the other of pain; and according to his will, mixed theſe two liquors, and thus determined the happineſs or misfortune of each man in proportion to the nature of the mixture. May we not likewiſe, with

ſome propriety, apply this fiction to the different kinds of agreeable ſenſations? The idea of our perfection, and the ſucceſſive exerciſe of our different faculties, are two ſources continually flowing with different pleaſures. A wiſe and beneficent being mixes theſe precious liquors in equal portions in favour of the man of wiſdom, and pours them out inceſſantly upon him.

Let us not then place our chief happineſs in riches and grandeur. There is no ſtate of life wherein it is not in our power to form a chain of agreeable ſenſations, by procuing to ourſelves a ſeries of virtuous exerciſes, which may keep our faculties in action without fatiguing them. Thoſe alone are happy in poſſeſſing,

poſſeſſing the gifts of fortune, who can be happy without the poſſeſſion of them. In reality, that man enjoys true and ſolid happineſs who confines his deſires within the circle of real wants, and graſps at nothing out of his reach; this is a ſort of philoſophy which will effectually ſecure him againſt all melancholy and uneaſineſs: but as ſoon as the human heart goes beyond theſe limits aſſigned by nature, it loſes itſelf in an immenſe field, where fortune ſports with it by the airy bewitching phantoms exhibited to it; and when once things are brought to this ſituation, we ſhall be able to find no bounds ſufficient to ſtop the rapidity of our deſires.

Health,

Health, a keen appetite, and ſtrength of body, ſeem to be the portion of indigence; beſides, the pleaſures of the mind, friendſhip and affection, tranquillity of ſoul, joy, and inward ſatisfaction, are oftener found in a middling ſtation, than in the retinue of princes. What then are the chief advantages of wealth and grandeur? They conſiſt in having our ſelf-love flattered by the magnificent ſtructure of our houſes, the richneſs of our furniture and equipage, and the power we have of lording it over others. We may certainly be happy in theſe advantages, but we are greatly to be lamented if we ſtand in need of theſe deceitful marks of perfection. Methinks they are like perfumes or con-

concerts; to enjoy them is agreeable, but it is the greateſt misfortune not to be able to bear the want of them.

Wiſdom not only baniſhes from us melancholy and chagrin, but alſo ſecures us againſt that pain which in good conſtitutions generally ariſes from exceſs; and when ſhe cannot abſolutely prevent it, ſhe at leaſt blunts the edge of its impreſſion, which acquires ſtrength in proportion as there is leſs courage to oppoſe it. A Grecian general, famous for having made one of the moſt glorious retreats *, aſſures us, that the ſame degree of fatigue is not ſo hard to the general as to the common ſoldier; the vanity of the former carries half the

* Xenophon.

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burden, whilſt the latter bears the whole upon his ſhoulders. The Indians, barbarians, and fanatics, have ſhewn a chearfulneſs in the midſt of the moſt exquiſite tortures, to ſuch a degree have they got the maſtery of their minds, as to be able to divert their attention from the ſenſation which gives them pain, and fix it upon ſome idea which flatters them. Is it impoſſible that reaſon and virtue ſhould learn from ambition and prejudice, in the ſame manner, to weaken the impreſſion of pain by agreeable diverſions?

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the pleaſure which is annexed to the performance of our duties to our fellow-creatures.

THERE are two ſpecies of maxims, in the obſervance of which the happineſs of mankind is not a little intereſted: the former are, as it were, the fundamental laws of ſociety; were theſe to be univerſally broke through, all men would be involved in one common misfortune; ſuch are theſe which compoſe what is called the law of nations: do injury to no one, and fulfil the engagements you have entered into. It is unjuſt, and declarative of our enmity to mankind,

mankind, to infringe theſe laws, unleſs when the intereſt of the public gives us a ſanction to do ſo.

There are other maxims which are leſs the baſis than the ornaments of ſociety; tho' they are not abſolutely neceſſary to ſupport it, yet they procure it all the perfection which it is ſuſceptible of. Such are thoſe which command us to ſuccour others in diſtreſs, and contribute all that lies in our power to promote the happineſs of our neighbours; if we obſerve theſe rules, then we ſhall be beneficent, and, in a manner, become the tutelar dieties of our fellow-creatures.

Theſe different maxims are compriſed in this goſpel precept, Love your neighbour as yourſelf; that is,

is, be juſt and beneficent. This is what morality enjoins us to perform, and the theory of ſenſation adviſes us to the ſame.

The victims of injuſtice are not the only ſufferers; as a ſerpent it begins with tearing the perſon in whoſe boſom it has been harboured. It owes its birth to an immoderate deſire of riches or honours, and produces uneaſineſs and diſcontent. If the unjuſt man ſhould flatter himſelf that he may eſcape the vengeance of men, or the juſtice of God, yet ſurely this he muſt lament, that he has placed his perfection or happineſs in ſuch a fleeting poſſeſſion of objects, which depend on the will of others, and lie at the diſpoſal of capricious fortune.

Pride and intereſt not only ſubject our happineſs to things without us, but alſo by waging a ſecret war on all around us, ſow in our hearts the ſeeds of general hatred, which weaken or ſtifle thoſe of benevolence and friendſhip. On the other hand, if we are free from thoſe vicious paſſions, then we view other men in the ſame light as we do the heros of tragedy; then the heart, framed by nature to love mankind, will be totally inclined to benevolence and friendſhip. Now if it is true that every degree of benevolence is a pleaſure, that ſorrow itſelf is accompanied with a ſecret ſatisfaction when it ariſes from benevolence, and that every effect of hatred and envy

vy is attended with pain, our happineſs muſt be ſo much the more complete and ſolid, as the conduct of our life is calculated to inſpire us with ſentiments of love and benevolence, and to remove thoſe of hatred and ill-will.

The habitual practice of juſtice and benevolence not only makes us happy by the motions excited in our heart, but ſtill renders us more ſo, by the ſentiments which are by this means inſpired into thoſe who keep us company.

The Author of nature, who has been ſo careful in furniſhing us with ſuch taſtes as are ſuited to our preſervation, has likewiſe implanted in us two different deſires in regard to other men, that of being feared, and that of being loved.

In the ſtate in which mankind were before the eſtabliſhment of civil laws, it was perhaps more important, and conſequently more agreeable to be feared than loved; becauſe fear is a better defence than love againſt thoſe whom ambition or intereſt have armed againſt us. Thus amongſt ſovereigns, who with reſpect to each other may be conſidered in this ſtate, it is often leſs agreeable to be loved than dreaded by the neighbouring powers. The caſe is quite different with individuals. The laws are the guardians of their property, their honour, and their lives: what does it ſignify to them to be feared? but it is highly important to them, and conſequently agreeable, to be loved. The love of others is often

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of great ſervice to us, and is always accompanied with continued marks of eſteem and friendſhip, which are generally more pleaſing than the very ſervices done to us. It has been ſaid of praiſe, that it is, to the perſon to whom it is offered, the moſt pleaſing of all muſic; and we may venture to affirm, that there is nothing more agreeable to the mind than to be beloved.

It is by juſtice and benevolence, that we procure this agreeable ſatisfaction. Pride and injuſtice cauſe diſlike; if weak and impotent, they become the objects of contempt; if joined to power, then they are hated by us. They aim at eſtabliſhing happineſs on the ruin of others, whereas virtue, by reconciling our

own happineſs with that of others, makes our private advantage their common good. We may form ſome notion of this, by that intereſt which we cannot help having in favour of thoſe virtuous perſons produced in tragedy upon our theatres.

It is true, indeed, that the appearance of virtue may produce this effect, as well as virtue herſelf. But we may ſay of her what has been ſaid of love; it is almoſt impoſſible to make the counterfeit paſs current for any conſiderable time; the only way to appear juſt and benevolent is really to be ſo.

Let us ſuppoſe a man, who being hated by all his acquaintance, hates them equally in his turn. All the objects which are offered to his ſight

ſight will be offenſive to him, all the motions excited in his heart will give him pain. Such we may conjecture to be the condition of thoſe unhappy wretches, who, after death, are wholly devoted to hatred and injuſtice; theſe have been their crimes in this world, the very practice of which has been their firſt puniſhment.

On the other hand, let us conſider the juſt and benevolent man, who rejoices in the love and eſteem of all who know him; his life is one continued act of benevolence, and all the objects preſented to him will be agreeable. The motions raiſed in his heart are ſo many pleaſures. Such certainly is the ſtate of thoſe happy mortals who are placed in the regions of bliſs,

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and whoſe minds are continually buſied in the exerciſe of benevolence, which was their delight whilſt here below on earth, and even then yielded them a ſort of recompence for their virtue, by that ſatisfaction which attended the practice of it.

Nothing is more uncommon to be met with, than a man perfectly unjuſt, or perfectly benevolent. Betwixt theſe two extremes there is a vaſt ocean, where the greateſt part of mankind fluctuate. The more our heart is given to hatred, the nearer we approach to complete miſery; and the more we have of benevolence, the nearer we arrive at perfect happineſs.

But it may be ſaid, How can we avoid hating thoſe who hurt us

us in our intereſt or reputation? We muſt own an attempt of this nature to be difficult; yet what ſhould we have a greater regard to than our happineſs? and can we obtain it if we indulge hatred in our hearts? Let us only be as ingenious to extirpate it from our breaſts, as we are often in vindicating and maintaining it to be right.

May it not happen, that thoſe whom we complain of, may have founded their conduct with reſpect to us upon very good reaſons; why then ſhould we hate them, ſince their behaviour has been ſuch, as our own would have been in the like ſituation? Nay, even though they unjuſtly attack us, we ought only to lament their misfortune in harbouring within their breaſt a

ſure

ſure principle of pain and uneaſineſs. They ought to be conſidered as ſick perſons, who in a violent fever imagine they ſhall cure themſelves by wounding every one that comes in their way. Let us guard againſt their fury; but let us not puniſh ourſelves, by giving way to paſſions which may ruffle and diſturb the quiet of our ſouls.

Beſides theſe ſentiments of humanity which we owe to mankind in general, there are likewiſe particular duties ariſing from the ſeveral ſtations wherein providence has placed us. They may be reduced to this general branch, to behave to our ſuperiors, equals, inferiors, and neighbours, as we would they ſhould do unto us in the like circumſtances. Let this

this be the rule of our conduct; and if we are careful ſtrictly to fulfil theſe duties, this will be a means to procure us the eſteem, as well as the affection and confidence of all our acquaintance, and will kindle in them the warmeſt ſentiments of benevolence towards us.

Among all the duties which ariſe from the various connections in life, there are none which have more the appearance of being beyond human nature, than thoſe of perfect friendſhip. It requires of us to give up our deareſt intereſt in favour of our friend, and to regard him as the moſt valuable part of ourſelves. However, there is no ſource more abounding in agreeable ſenſations, than the accompliſh-

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ment of theſe duties which appear ſo difficult; and even to be ſenſible of having a capacity to perform them, is a very exquiſite pleaſure.

There have been ſome eminent authors, who have maintained, that in the intercourſe of friendſhip, we have more to loſe than we can gain; 'tis, ſay they, a ſort of extenſion of ourſelves, which expoſes us to miſery, not only in our own perſons, but in thoſe of others alſo. To think in this manner, in my opinion, betrays a total ignorance of the power of love. Virtue is of ſuch a nature, and the intereſt which true friends feel in what affects each other, is ſo peculiar, that it multiplies their joys, and diminiſhes their ſorrows; nay, even in the

the mutual ſadneſs of friends there is diffuſed a ſort of pleaſing ſenſation, which they would not part with for the moſt lively pleaſures.

But if it is true, that benevolence alone makes men happy; how comes it about, that the generality of mankind ſeem prone to injuſtice and hatred? The principal cauſe of this diſtraction is the falſe impreſſion which riches and grandeur make upon us. By the deluſive ſplendor, which often conceals a real miſery, we often make an eſtimate of ſupreme felicity: and inſtead of exerciſing our faculties, and conducting ourſelves towards others, in ſuch a manner as to inſpire us with ſentiments which are accommodated to our nature, and ſuited to our happineſs, we are

impatient to obtain an unbounded meaſure of things, which, in themſelves, are not neceſſary, and are only made ſo by our fantaſtical way of thinking; and we ſacrifice every thing that proves an obſtacle to theſe unlimited deſires. 'Tis not ſo with thoſe nations, where an equality of wealth and circumſtances prevent the entrance of ambition and avarice; in all their relations in life, 'tis eſteemed as a popular quality among them, to be beneficent to all whom they do not look upon as their enemies.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the happineſs annexed to virtue.

I Shall here bring into one view all the different ſorts of pleaſures which accompany virtue.

Sextus Empiricus gives us an extract of a performance of Crantor, which treats of the pre-eminence due to all the different kinds of happineſs. This famous philoſopher feigned, that, after the example of the goddeſſes who had ſubmitted their beauty to the determination of Paris, in like manner the deities who preſide over riches, pleaſure, health, and virtue, preſented themſelves before the whole nation of the Greeks, when aſſembled

at the Olympic games, and desired them to assign each of them their rank, in proportion to the degree of influence which they had over the happiness of men. Riches made a parade with her magnificence, and endeavoured to dazzle the sight of the judges; but Pleasure stepped forth, and represented, that the only use of riches was to procure us pleasure, and therefore she laid claim to the first place: Health at the same time advanced her plea, alledging, that without her all joy would soon be converted into sorrow. At last Virtue made her appearance, and ended the dispute, by plainly demonstrating to the Greeks, that if we overflowed ever so much with riches, or enjoyed ever so much pleasure

and

and health, yet if we had not the aſſiſtance of wiſdom and bravery, we ſhould ſoon become the ſport of our enemies. The firſt rank was thereupon adjudged to Virtue, the ſecond to Health, the third to Pleaſure, and the fourth to Riches.

But, in my opinion, it is too much degrading Virtue to make her principal buſineſs conſiſt in being a guard to her rivals; for we may found her pre-eminence upon much more noble titles. Riches, Pleaſure, and Health, become evils when we know not how to make a proper uſe of them. Wiſdom alone, to ſpeak with propriety, deſerves the name of goodneſs, ſince, by her means, misfortunes frequently become happineſs; while, on the other hand, if ſhe is not preſent,

thoſe things which we account the greateſt happineſs, turn out quite the contrary. She removes from us all painful ſenſations, and excites in us thoſe that are the moſt agreeable.* Sorrow for what's paſt, repining at what is preſent, and anxiety for futurity, are the greateſt ſcourges of the human race; but Virtue defends us from them, by confining our deſires to what is within our reach, by making them conformable to reaſon, ſubjecting them to the laws of our Creator, and placing our perfection not in the poſſeſſion of wavering fleeting objects, but in the proper exerciſe of our faculties, ſuch as are ſuited to our preſent condition. Spleen and diſcontent ſpread their infection even to the very throne;

throne; but they dare not approach Wiſdom, which adorns life with a ſucceſſion of virtuous employments, and forms a chain of agreeable ſenſations. She even often wards off diſeaſes from us, which are generally the fruits of intemperance. She does not debar us from the pleaſures of the ſenſes, but offers them to us in all their purity and innocence, and they become agreeable in proportion as we ſtand in need of them. The pleaſures of the mind follow in her train, nor do they abandon her even in ſolitude and adverſity.

Wherever the virtuous man turns his thoughts, upon God, mankind in general, or his friends and neighbours in particular, he perceives motives of ſecret joy. He conforms

forms himſelf to the deſign of his Creator, lives worthy of the regard of all his friends and acquaintance, and would ſurely be loved and eſteemed by all intelligent beings, if they were all able to ſee into the candor and honeſty of his heart. He is entirely free from hatred as well as fear, and lives in the continued exerciſe of benevolence; that is to ſay, in the enjoyment of the moſt agreeable ſenſations: in ſhort, the ſatisfaction which accompanies an upright heart, is to the mind, as Solomon expreſſes it, a perpetual feaſt. And thus all the different kinds of agreeable ſenſations are united in favour of Wiſdom, and being combined in proportions regulated by their vivacity, duration, and agreement, they form the

the moſt delicious of all harmonies.

But the greateſt of all bleſſings, which the virtuous man enjoys here below, is at the hour of death, which throws others into deſpair, whereas it ſeems to him only as a paſſage into a more happy life.

The unjuſt man beholds death as a frightful ſpectre, which every moment approaches nearer and nearer to him, imbitters all his pleaſures, gives a double edge to all his misfortunes, and threatens to deliver him up to a God who is the avenger of the innocent. The only thing which ſeems favourable to him in the proſpect of death, is that it will plunge him into a ſtate of annihilation; but this groundleſs hope is conſiderably weakened by the

the authority of revelation, by the inward conſciouſneſs of his own identity, and the idea of a juſt and all-powerful Diety.

It is not ſo with the virtuous man. Death brings him into the preſence of a beneficent and intelligent Being, whoſe laws he has always regarded, and whoſe goodneſs he has often experienced.

If it is true that hope is in itſelf an agreeable ſenſation, and this in proportion to the greatneſs of the good which is the object of it, there cannot be upon earth a more delightful ſituation than that of a man, who feeling a preſent happineſs in virtue, has in death a noble proſpect of perfect felicity opened to him.

I have

I have been giving the picture of the wiſe man, when perhaps ſuch a one does not exiſt in nature; but we ſhall be more and more happy in proportion as we reſemble this portrait. There is in morals, as well as in arts, a certain idea of perfection which artiſts ought to endeavour after, though they can never hope to attain to it.

I need not dread the ridicule of thoſe who pretend to give laws to their ſuperiors, if after having pointed out the ſources of happineſs, I obſerve that they flow equally to empires and private perſons. This is a ſpeculation which too much intereſts the human ſpecies in general, to be forbidden to any one who has a mind to amuſe himſelf with it.

A fatal prejudice ſeems to ſet ſovereigns above the laws of ſtrict equity, which are ſeemingly deſtined for no other end, than to ſerve as maſks to conceal and diſguiſe their ambitious views. How often have we ſeen ſtates complain of a ſuperior power for the violation of theſe laws, while, at the ſame time, they infringe them by their conduct to inferior powers. It is however certain, that in princes as well as in ſubjects, injuſtice may be compared to counterfeit money, which diſcovers real miſery *.

Let us ſuppoſe a people to be perfectly unjuſt, we ſhall ſoon perceive them to be perfectly unhappy. Being the declared enemies of mankind they will be

* Anti-Machiavel.

equal-

equally miſerable by the ſenſations which they raiſe in others, as by thoſe which they feel in themſelves: Being feared and hated by all their neighbours, they muſt likewiſe fear and hate them. It is not neceſſary that the neighbouring nations ſhould take up arms for their defence. It is ſufficient that each of the individuals guide their conduct by the maxims of the ſtate, and accordingly make uſe of every method, tho' ever ſo deteſtible, to raiſe themſelves upon the ruins of each other: then we ſhall have ſuch a race of men revived, as formerly ſtruck a terror into Cadmus, when they ſprung out of the earth, and lived together for no other reaſon but to deſtroy each other.

Such a ſociety of men could not ſubſiſt, nor does hiſtory furniſh us with any example of this nature. It has been often obſerved, that robbers could not keep their ſocieties, were they not to preſerve a ſtrict juſtice among themſelves: there have indeed been nations who have been more addicted to injuſtice than others, yet they have been more unhappy in proportion as they were more unjuſt.

Let us not meaſure the happineſs of a kingdom by its grandeur or power: theſe are only to be conſidered as ramparts, which are of uſe to defend a place againſt its enemies, but are not ſufficient to conſtitute the happineſs of its inhabitants. What ſtate could ſhine with more luſtre than that of the

the Romans, who met in their public places, at their pleaſure diſpoſed of the moſt diſtant kingdoms, and gave laws to the moſt powerful monarchs, but being at the height of injuſtice, ſoon arrived at the height of miſery.

What they aimed at was to inſlave the whole world; deſarts, foreſts, even vaſt ſeas were not ſufficient bulwarks againſt the ambition of that people, till at laſt all the neighbouring nations combined againſt the common enemy, and, in the ſpace of a few ages, overturned a power which had the appearance of being able to ſubſiſt as long as the univerſe itſelf.

The leading men in this republic had indeed proved its moſt fatal enemies; almoſt all of them graſped at the dominion over their countrymen; and thoſe who could not aſpire ſo high, endeavoured at leaſt to enrich themſelves by the ruin of the provinces which were intruſted to their care.

This corruption of manners had equally infected all orders of the ſtate, and this nation, governed by arbitrary princes, were always ready to ſell their votes, their laws, and liberty, to the higheſt bidder.

An empire in ſuch a ſituation as this, may have an external appearance of happineſs, by the pageantry of particular perſons, the pomp of their public ceremonies, and their numerous and magnificent armies; but

but frightful miſery lurks in the vitals of ſuch a ſtate, which is inwardly conſumed by hatred, fear, faction, diſtraction, and all that train of evils which proceeds from an unlimited luſt of power.

Hiſtory furniſhes us with too many inſtances of this ſort; and if it is true that Diogenes, notwithſtanding all the inquiries he had made, could find none but unjuſt men in Athens, we may deſpair of finding a virtuous people in the annals of mankind. Ambition has been the eſtabliſher of moſt kingdoms, and ſeems carefully to keep up her claim to that title. To this end ſhe directs all her maxims, and for this purpoſe ennobles her cuſtoms.

If there is any nation whoſe diſtinguiſhing character is ſtrict juſtice, we have good reaſon to think that we muſt not look for ſuch among thoſe who have made the greateſt figure on the theatre of the world. We muſt rather expect to find ſuch a people enjoying a ſecret and undiſturbed happineſs, remote from the buſtling ſcenes of life, which they reſign to thoſe infatuated nations, who are actuated by violent ambition, and ſtrive to aggrandize themſelves by the ruin of their neighbours.

One of the moſt admirable deſcriptive writers of antiquity has given us the following account of ſuch a virtuous and obſcure people†.

† Tac. De morib. German. c. 35.

"The

" The Chaqui, ſays Tacitus, are " a very powerful and populous " nation: they aſpire to be great " by no other means than juſtice: " their diſpoſitions are naturally " turned to peace and quiet: they " cultivate their own lands with- " out forming any deſign of inva- " ding their neighbours territo- " ries: virtue is not in them the " effect of weakneſs; for they a- " bound in infantry as well as ca- " valry, and as they have a deal of " humanity and good nature, they " have no leſs courage to oppoſe " their enemies."

* " Every one takes a pleaſure " in entertaining even a ſtranger, " and giving him a ſhare of his " proviſions; and if he ſhould fall

* C. 21. & 35. De mor. Ger.

" ſhort,

" ſhort, he then conducts his gueſt
" to the houſe of ſome neighbour,
" who takes it as the greateſt kind-
" neſs from his friend, who has
" put it into his power to ſhew his
" hoſpitality and friendſhip."

There have been German ſtates of a later date, who ſeem to have inherited by ſucceſſion all the probity of that people. We may be convinced of this by what has been ſaid by a cotemporary hiſtorian, little inferior to Tacitus, either in the ſtrength of his pencil or the juſtneſs of his pictures. " When
" there was any demand for a pub-
" lic expence, ſays Machiavel *,
" the ſenate demanded of every
" particular as a tax, a certain part
" of his revenue; the method of

* Diſcor. l. 5. c. 15.

" raiſing

" raiſing this tax is very particu-
" lar, the conſcience of every per-
" ſon is charged with it: and e-
" very one, on the appointed day,
" brings the ſums aſſigned by law,
" and the funds are always an-
" ſwerable to the intentions of the
" ſenate, and ſufficient for the exi-
" gencies of the ſtate."

This people, who were not corrupted by luxury or poverty, did not decline bearing a part in the public burden, but looked upon themſelves as indiſpenſibly obliged to contribute towards an expence which the public ſtood in need of.

Such a corruption of morals prevails at preſent, that there are but few men who have virtue ſufficient to make the world believe the poſſibility

ſibility of what a whole people have been virtuous enough to practiſe.

Let us croſs the ſeas, if it is neceſſary, and paſs into a new world in queſt of ſuch a people as this. We could formerly have found ſuch a one in the American iſles which Columbus diſcovered. Herrera, in his firſt Decade, has particularly deſcribed the manners of the inhabitants at that time. It ſeems to be a deſcription of the golden age; and this famous hiſtorian had his materials from the archives of the Spaniſh conſul, who cannot be ſuſpected of the leaſt partiality in favour of the Indians.

At preſent Penſilvania, a colony on the continent of America, propoſes to revive the virtues of the primitive Chriſtians, and by

by the innocence of their manners alone have formed to themſelves a defence, which has ſtruck a religious awe into the wild Indians, who at the ſame time are not at all daunted at the bravery and martial exploits of the other Europeans.

In ſhort, if we can give credit to the accounts given of Paraguay, it appears by them, that ſome of our zealous miſſionaries there have put into execution the glorious plan of Plato's republic.

All theſe different nations are hardly more than atoms on the ſurface of the earth; but if we may believe the Chineſe, the greateſt of all empires has been the moſt virtuous, and in the courſe of three dynaſties, there was a ſucceſſion of princes

princes ſo full of juſtice and beneficence, that all the neighbouring nations courted it as a favour to be governed by their laws.

We ſhall at preſent endeavour to give a ſketch of an empire perfectly virtuous; and in it imitate that painter who painted a Venus, by collecting all the different features which he could diſcern in the moſt celebrated beauties.

We muſt ſuppoſe then agriculture to flouriſh in this happy kingdom, under the ſhelter of peace; that all the arts, ſciences, and commerce, meet with the greateſt encouragement; by this means poverty and idleneſs will be baniſhed, and full ſcope given to the genius and talents of mankind. It is neceſſary

neceſſary that the head of the ſtate ſhould cheriſh all the different orders as members, none of which can labour under the weight of of want and miſery, but the whole body muſt feel the fatal effects. We muſt ſuppoſe that ſtrict juſtice is obſerved in fulfilling all treaties, eſtabliſhing all laws, and in impoſing all taxes and public expences. We may include, that all the neighbouring nations will be intereſted in the preſervation of ſuch a ſtate, and will be ready to arm in its defence, tho' at the ſame time, independently of all foreign aſſiſtance, it is able to oppoſe its unjuſt invaders; for this will be the greateſt poſſible ſafeguard to ſo wealthy and populous a nation.

We may ſay of ſuch a perfect kingdom, what we formerly ſaid of the complete ſage, Perhaps it never exiſted. This is the ideal perfection aimed at in politics. But however that may be, 'tis certain that we may meaſure the happineſs of ſtates by the reſemblance which they bear to this model of their felicity.

But notwithſtanding this plan of a happy government has not yet actually exiſted, yet there is no impoſſibility but it may.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

An inquiry into what kinds of life are moſt happy.

THE greateſt part of mankind make their happineſs depend upon others; even when they are at the height of grandeur, they often aim at being happy under the title of ſuppliants. It is almoſt impoſſible that thoſe who have it in their power to determine their lot, ſhould always gratify their deſires. The heart of every man, to uſe a Carteſian expreſſion, is a ſort of vortex, the center of whoſe motions is its own private happineſs. But if we expect that our happineſs ſhould become the

common center of all others, this would be deſiring a perfect change in their nature, this would be as abſurd as to conſent that our happineſs depends upon a miracle. Therefore let us ſuit ourſelves in the beſt manner that's poſſible to our neighbours, but let us not expect to be truly happy, but by gratifying the diſpoſitions peculiar to our nature. I call that a happy condition of life, in which the agreeable ſenſations are ſuperior in number to thoſe which are painful: they are divided into three different claſſes, according as the propenſities of the body, the mind, or the heart, are predominant.

If we had an intention to bring together a ſet of men truly to be envied for their happineſs, I believe

lieve it would be in vain for us to look for ſuch in the higheſt ſtations of life, but we ſhould find them amongſt thoſe who ſubſiſt by a moderate labour, and by this means earn a ſufficient competency for themſelves and their families. We might ſoon perceive that ſuch mortals as theſe live moſt free from anxiety, uneaſineſs, and ſpleen, and inwardly poſſeſs a ſecret fund of joy, which diſcovers itſelf on all occaſions. Their life is not ſo full of noiſe and ſhew, but it is more ſafe and quiet; and tho' there may be ſome pleaſures which they are deprived of, yet they enjoy a great many more which thoſe in a higher ſphere of life are ſtrangers to.

The impreſſions made on the body are leſs agreeable than thoſe

made upon the mind. One kind of life will then be more agreeable, in proportion as it is attended with more exercise of the mind than labour of the body. What can be more pleasing than to be able to enjoy all seasons, all places, and nature in general? A happiness so exquisite as this has fallen to the lot only of a few extraordinary persons. It is a sort of sanctuary, the gates of which ignorance has shut up for several ages from the greatest part of mankind; she has blasted the flowers of knowledge in private men, while, at the same time, she has ennobled injustice in conquerors.

Since it is from the heart that the most agreeable sensations flow, hence we may conclude that to be the

the happieſt ſort of life where benevolence moſt prevails. Thoſe whom fortune has been laviſh to in her favours, cannot taſte the true ſweets of her bounty, unleſs they feel a benevolent diſpoſition to ſerve the reſt of mankind. Their true happineſs is to be meaſured by the number of their fellow-creatures whom they make happy.

What can be equal to the happineſs of that prince, who does not confine his benevolence within the narrow circle of courtiers and flatterers who ſurround him, but enlarges his views, and makes the influence of his bounty extend to all his ſubjects, in order to procure to them all the bleſſings of life? He baniſhes miſery from his ſtate; he gives life to arts and ſciences,

ſciences, and makes trade flouriſh; he encourages men of genius and virtue. By this method he will make plenty reign through all dominions, which will tend more to increaſing his revenues and multiplying his people, than the moſt extenſive conqueſts do. The certainty of ſtrengthening and augmenting his power by means which are infallible, the delightful thoughts of being the miniſter of the Deity in procuring happineſs of mankind, the ſight of a whole people made happy by his generoſity, the pleaſure of beholding ſo noble a ſcheme put into execution, in ſuch a manner as not to be liable to become the ſport of fortune, the continual ſucceſſion of the moſt agreeable exerciſes of benevolence; in

in ſhort, all the objects of ſight, all the ideas of the mind, and all the motions of the heart, conſpire to make his ſtate the moſt happy which human nature is capable of.

It is true, perhaps, in this train of virtuous ſenſations, there may not be any ſo keen and lively as thoſe of a conqueror, whoſe ambition is fluſhed with victory. Yet the conqueror purchaſes this pleaſure by his running the riſk of becoming the moſt unhappy of all men, becauſe he is more liable to have his taſte depraved by the principles of hatred, as well as by trouble and anxiety.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Proofs that moral philoſophy is within the reach of all men.

PHiloſophers, and the greateſt part of lawgivers, confine the vulgar to a profound ignorance: they imagine the only way to reſtrain them from vice is the fear of puniſhment. Plato himſelf, in his republic, where he advances the boldeſt notions, has not ventured to form a people virtuous by the ſtrength of reaſon, but has inveſted the magiſtrate alone with the charge of moral duties. But what are the depths of this ſcience which are ſet apart to ſuch extraordinary perſons? In my opinion they may be

be comprehended in a few maxims, which, in a manner, flow from the knowledge of ſenſations.

Let us reſpectfully ſubmit ourſelves to the laws of that beneficent intelligence to which we are neceſſarily ſubjected.

Let us, in a ſeries of employments ſuited to our talents and condition, ſeek for the ſmall portion of happineſs which we may hope to attain in this lower world.

Let us not place our perfection in the poſſeſſion of things which are out of our power.

Let us live with the reſt of mankind in ſuch a manner as we may carry in our heart the ſentiments of benevolence towards them, and baniſh from our breaſt all hatred,

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uneaſineſs, melancholy, and diſcontent.

In order to make us perceive that our happineſs depends upon the obſervance of theſe maxims, there is no occaſion to mount up to the heavens above, or deſcend to the regions below; ſince we may every day meet with proofs as eaſily comprehended as the principles of the moſt common arts.

Need we be at any great pains to perceive, that our misfortunes will become more light, and our proſperity greater, by the idea of a juſt and bountiful Power, who is the grand diſpenſer of all events?

The countryman whom Horace mentions, might be ſufficient to per-

perſuade others, that they cannot be happy but by a kind of life that's ſuited to their condition and talents. A ſeries of obſcure employments procured him a happineſs ſo little envied, that he never knew the value of it. Auguſtus's father-in-law made him a preſent of a piece of land, on condition that he would reſide there, and content himſelf with the tranquillity he could there enjoy. His former gaiety was ſoon ſuſpended by uneaſineſs, peeviſhneſs, and diſcontent. Take back your preſent, ſaid he to his benefactor, and reſtore me to my former ſituation.

We find by Lucian's account, that the Athenians had been ſo well convinced by Socrates and his diſ-

ciples, that they made themſelves appear ridiculous by endeavouring to become famous by the poſſeſſion of goods which were out of their power, that they heartily deſpiſed thoſe who endeavoured to procure eſteem by the magnificence or grandeur of their retinue.

In ſhort, 'tis only neceſſary we ſhould be capable of loving and hating, to be convinced that our lives will never be more happy than when we find our hearts warm with the ſentiments of benevolence, and thorough ſtrangers to the motions of hatred.

It is not then with moral philoſophy, as it is with moſt other ſciences, which ſeem only to give their oracles in deſerts that

are

are inacceſſible to the bulk of mankind; but there is no myſtery here which ſhe is not ready to diſcloſe, to all thoſe who are capable of the leaſt degree of reflection.

6 NO 61

A DISSERTATION UPON HARMONY of STYLE.

ONE of our beſt writers affirms, that the ſources of harmony of ſtyle are not yet quite diſcovered. However I am of opinion, that we may find them all in Cicero, and other ancient rhetoricians, and by their aſſiſtance, undertake to

bring them to light. But in order to ſucceed therein, we muſt meaſure ſyllables, words, and periods. A fine ſtudy for men of nice and delicate taſtes! And will it not be a bold ſtep to bring forth theſe grammatical obſervations from the obſcure corners where they ſeem to be at preſent confined? But why ſhould we affect a delicacy which the greateſt men of Rome and Athens were ſtrangers to? We find there have been conſuls and emperors, crowned with victory, and at the ſummit of grandeur, who have not thought it unworthy of them to dive into the principles of an art, which is in a manner the foundation of all others, the bond which unites all men of genius, and which, under trifling appearances, con-

conceals the fruitful ſources of real pleaſure. It is true, that ambition then gave a dignity to thoſe inquiries, which contributed to procure a ſway in popular aſſemblies by the charms of eloquence: but Philoſophy will ſtill add a greater dignity to ſuch ſtudies, ſince ſhe will make uſe of them to diſcover to us, how far the Author of the laws of ſenſation has carried his benevolent care and attention to mankind.

By harmony of ſtyle, I underſtand the agreeable turn preſerved in the various parts of a ſentence ‡.

The moſt ſimple phraſes are capable of receiving a ſort of har-

‡ I do not here pretend to give a complete definition of harmony of ſtyle, but only propoſe to acquaint the reader with the ſubject of this diſſertation.

mony,

mony, if we aſſign the higheſt places to the moſt important ideas, the moſt ſonorous expreſſions, or the longeſt words.

We naturally love to preſent firſt our moſt intereſting ideas; but this arrangement which is dictated by ſelf-love, is quite different from that preſcribed by the art of pleaſing. The principal law which this art lays down, is to ſeem to forget themſelves in favour of others; for it is in periods, as in tragedies and other productions of the liberal arts, where the parts are ſhewn in ſucceſſion; the intereſt and pleaſure of the hearer vaniſhes as ſoon as they are diminiſhed. Therefore the moſt intereſting ideas, the moſt ſonorous expreſſions, and the long-

eſt

eſt words, ought as much as poſſible to be placed laſt.

This rule, which ought to be ſtrictly obſerved, when our deſign is to pleaſe or to affect, will admit ſome exception, when we intend to perſuade or inſtruct. The rhetoricians adviſe us, if we are to make uſe of a weaker argument in conjunction with thoſe that are more ſtrong, that we ſhould not begin with advancing any thing which may convey a notion of the weakneſs of our cauſe; that the firſt argument ſhould give a favourable prepoſſeſſion, a weak one ſhould be loſt in the croud, and the laſt ought always to be the moſt ſtriking. It is ſometimes neceſſary too to obſerve this method in the arrangement of our ideas in a period,

period, ſo that we ought to give the firſt place to the moſt intereſting idea, when it can throw any light upon the ſubject which we intend to clear up.

When the ideas are equally intereſting, it is the length of the words, which ought as much as poſſible to determine their poſition. The ancient grammarians have made this obſervation, that when in any phraſe there are words much longer than the reſt, and conſequently more difficult to retain, the beſt way will be to put them in the laſt place *; then they will have a greater influence on the me-

* In verbis obſervandum eſt, ne a majoribus minora diſcendat oratio; melius enim dicetur, Vir eſt optimus, quam vir optimus eſt. Diomed. l. 2. cap. De ſtructura perfectæ orationis. See likewiſe Hermog. l. 1. & Harpocrat. 104.

mory.

mory. We may be convinced of the truth of this obſervation, by the eaſe with which children repeat the laſt parts of a diſcourſe.

It may be obſerved here, that ſeveral monoſyllables united, terminate a ſentence well, becauſe to the ear they appear no more than one word.

Such is the ſtructure of the fibres ſubſervient to hearing, that they act by the laws of this theory, even when the mind is inconſcious of it. The author of the French proſody has remarked, that the ſyllables which are ſhort in that language, become long at the end of a ſentence. Our forefathers, as well as the Greeks and Romans, perceived it to be agreeable to the ear, that the laſt part of a phraſe ſhould be

be the longeſt; for this reaſon they have refined a little, and diverſified the pronunciation of the ſame word *. Sometimes it may happen, that the moſt intereſting idea ſhall be contained in the ſhorteſt word; are we then to refuſe, if I may ſo ſay, the place of honour due to it? or muſt we incumber the ſentence with a uſeleſs weight? No ſurely, for we muſt always give up the ſound for the ſenſe. An author ought to look upon beauty of ſtyle in the ſame light as the wiſe man does the favours of fortune; he makes a proper uſe of them when offered to him, and if they fly from him he diſdains to hunt after them.

* Thus *votre* which is ſhort, *Je ſuis votre ſerviteur*, becomes long when it terminates a phraſe, *Je ſuis le vôtre.*

Our

Our expreſſions, though ranged according to the dignity of our ideas, may be ſo harſh and contrary to harmony, that, according to Cicero's remark, the mind may ſeem to give up its own intereſt, in order that the ear may be gratified. 'Tis chiefly in periods that eloquence appears to diſplay all the magnificence of ſtyle.

I ſhall not here enter into a detail of thoſe diſtinctions which rhetoricians have made among periods, and the different ſpecies of parts which compoſe them; nor ſhall I confine myſelf to their definitions, but ſhall make uſe of them only ſo far as they ſeem capable of contributing to give ſome light to the nature of harmony.

By a period I underſtand a ſentence compoſed of ſeveral parts, which being ſeparated from each other, ſtill retain ſome ſenſe, but not a complete one till they are at laſt united; and in order to be pronounced with eaſe and gracefulneſs, each muſt be diſtinguiſhed by a proper cadence of the voice; theſe ſentences may receive a beauty either from the proportion and ſymmetry of their parts, or from their meaſured gradation. We have the authority of Cicero, as well as ſeveral Grecian philoſopers, to confirm us in this obſervation †.

'Twas

† Si membra in extremo breviora ſunt, infringitur ille quaſi verborum ambitus, ſic enim has orationis converſiones Græci nominant: quare ut paria eſſe debent poſteriora ſuperioribus, extrema

'Twas from harmonious proportion, as Quintilian remarks, that poetry firſt took its riſe; from this too rhetoric has borrowed moſt of her figures, and though theſe ornaments appear ridiculous when farfetched, yet the orator very often makes uſe of them to the greateſt advantage. We have a very remarkable proof of this handed down to us in hiſtory. Gorgias the Sicilian † was the firſt who learned to exerciſe theſe parts of eloquence. He was ſent to Athens as an ambaſſador by the Leontians his countrymen, to

trema primis, aut quod jam eſt melius et jucundius, longiora; atque hæc quidem ab iis philoſophis quos tu maxime diligis, Catule, dicta ſunt, quod eo ſæpius teſtificor ut authoribus laudandis ineptiarum crimen effugiam. Cic. De orat. l. 3. c. 103. † Diod. l. 12.

implore aſſiſtance againſt a neighbouring power: he made a ſpeech to the Athenians, wherein his expreſſions were ſo harmonious, his meaſures ſo muſical, and his ideas ranged with ſo much art, that he perfectly ſtruck them with admiration. He prevailed upon them more by the beauty of his figures, than the ſtrength of his arguments, to carry on a war in Sicily in favour of his native country.

The gradation in the members of a period are ſtill more agreeable than their ſymmetry: by this means art is better concealed, though, at the ſame time, it is more diverſified; and as in the arrangement of expreſſions, and even of ſyllables, it is pleaſing to the ear when the longeſt words are placed laſt, in like

like manner, ſuch a diſpoſition of the members in a period will certainly yield a ſimiliar pleaſure: Here it may not be improper to produce ſome examples of this kind:

Les plaintes de ceux qui ſouffrent,
ſays *M. Flechier,*
Rempliſſent l'ame d'une triſteſſe importune.

I think it is evident, that every period formed on this model muſt be always agreeable.

Thus M. Boſſuet, ſpeaking of a queen of England, expreſſes himſelf in there words:

Iſſue de tant de Rois,
Son grand cœur ſurpaſſa ſa naiſſance.

Here the ear is no leſs pleaſed with the cadence of the ſound, than the mind with the grandeur of the idea.

Perhaps it may be ſaid, that the name of periods cannot properly be aſſigned to theſe ſentences, or others which I ſhall mention afterwards, nor that of members to the parts which form them; but all theſe denominations are indifferent: It is ſufficient for my purpoſe, in tracing the ſources of harmony, that the reader acknowledges that theſe different ſentences are capable of being pronounced with more eaſe and gracefulneſs, when their different parts are diſtinguiſhed by a proper cadence of the voice.

The explication of that which conſtitutes the number of periods com-

compoſed of two members, comprehends almoſt the whole theory of proſe. It is generally the end of a ſentence which determines its beauty; the recent impreſſion of the two laſt members ſeems to efface that of thoſe that went before. However, though in periods of more than two members, meaſured gradations are pleaſures which the ear does not require, yet it is not inſenſible to them, when they are offered to it, as is evinced by the following examples.

Deja prenoit l'eſſor,
Pour ſe ſauver vers les montagnes,
Cet Aigle, dont le vol hardi avoit d'abord effrayé nos provinces. *

* M. Flechier in his account of Montecuculli.

So

So agreeable is the gradation of members in a period, that, upon its account, we may frequently reverſe the common order of the expreſſions.

There are ſome more examples which I ſhall quote from Cicero. We need only look into his orations, to meet with abundance of the moſt perfect and harmonious periods. This great orator, in order to prove that Cecilius could not become the accuſer of Verres, aſks him if it would come well from him to ſay, I accuſe him.

Quicum quæſtor fueram,
Quicum me ſors conſuetudoque majorum,
Quicum me deorum hominumque judicium conjunxerat.

The

The Roman people, ſays he in the ſame oration, has many pledges of my ſtrict juſtice in the accuſation of Verres:

Habet honorem quem petimus,
That was the Ædileſhip.
Habet ſpem quam propoſitam nobis habemus,
That was the Conſulſhip.
Habet exiſtimationem multo ſudore, labore, vigiliiſque collectam.

When the ideas, as well as the members in a period, riſe by a ſort of gradual progreſſion, this forms a harmony at once grateful to the ear, and agreeable to the mind.

There are other periods which, tho' perfect in their kind, yet have two equal members, and one that is unequal.

If

If the unequal member is the leaſt, then it is to be placed firſt.

Thus Cicero brings in Africa as an evidence of the valour of Pompey.

Teſtis eſt Africa
Quæ magnis oppreſſa hoſtium copiis,
Eorum ipſorum ſanguine redundavit.

If the unequal member is the greateſt, then it ought to end the period; as in that of Craſſus, which Cicero has preſerved, and which he has aſſured us charmed the whole Roman people:

Eripite nos ex miſeriis,
Eripite nos ex faucibus eorum,
Quorum

Quorum crudelitas noſtro ſanguine non poteſt expleri.

If we ſhould change the order of theſe periods, we might eaſily perceive, that by this means we ſhould deſtroy their harmony.

There are periods, however, conſiſting of ſeveral members, which deviate from this general rule; and though the laſt member may be leſs than the preceding, yet it has ſo exact a proportion, that this ſupplies the want of order and progreſſion.

M. Fenelon ſays, when he ſpeaks of Calypſo:

Dans ſa douleur
Elle ſe trouvoit malheureuſe
D'être immortelle.

The

The firſt and laſt members are equal, and that which divides them is the double of each of them; the juſtneſs of theſe relations yields a pleaſure to the ear, not inferior to that of a continued proportion.

The principle or rule, which, if obſerved, gives a beauty to expreſſions that are to be ſounded together, muſt ſurely have a great influence in muſic, as well as in verſification, and harmony of ſtyle. Theſe are but different kinds of muſic, ſince the object of them all is to pleaſe by ſounds; and in order to obtain this end, they muſt have recourſe to one and the ſame common principle. Muſic, to afford a greater variety and reſemblance in her compoſitions, ſometimes makes uſe of the moſt whimſical

ſical relations; but thoſe which ſhe prefers moſt, are the uniſon, the octave, the fifth, *&c.* that is thoſe of equality, from one to two, from two to three, *&c.* There are likewiſe ſome which in all languages are conſtantly made uſe of in verſification; and if in proſe there is ſomething agreeable in harmonious proportions uſed with diſcretion *, ſurely thoſe muſt be moſt pleaſing to the ear, which

* Poetæ quæſtionem attulerunt, quidnam eſſet illud quo ipſi different ab oratoribus: numero maxime videbantur, &c. . . . nunc apud oratores numerus jam ipſe increbruit: quidquid eſt enim quod ſub aurium menſuram aliquam cadit, numerus vocatur. Orator. c. 37. & De oratore, l. 1. cap. 36.

Fieri poteſt ut non plane par ſit numerus ſyllabarum, et tamen eſſe videatur: ſi una aut etiam altera ſyllaba, membrum alterum eſt brevius. L. 3. ad Herennium, c. 175.

are as eaſy to be retained as harmony, and have always leſs the appearance of ſtiffneſs and affectation. Verſification and muſic do not render theſe proportions agreeable, becauſe they make uſe of them, but they love to make uſe of them, becauſe they are agreeable; and when they are brought in ſo as to ſeem eaſy and natural, they anſwer the end propoſed, and retain all that beauty which nature has annexed to them.

We may then perceive the truth of what Cicero ſays, that proſe has its meaſures as well as poetry, and the only thing which diſtinguiſhes it, is its not being tied up to a particular number of ſyllables, but enjoying the liberty to make uſe of more or leſs at pleaſure.

Theſe

Theſe meaſures may, no doubt, be expreſſed by numbers, for otherwiſe they could not be called meaſures.

They may be expreſſed in a manner that makes them eaſy to be comprehended and retained, becauſe they pleaſe the ear, and are ſuited to the memory.

In ſhort, the meaſures in proſe are ſo extenſive and full of variety, that they may appear quite natural, and all art be concealed; for tho' a flow of periods viſibly meaſured, may charm in poetry, yet they would appear ſhocking in proſe: the buſineſs of a poet is as much to pleaſe the ear as touch the heart; whereas the orator ought to addreſs himſelf to the mind, and

ſhould ſeem to have no other deſign but that alone; however theſe embelliſhments of rhetoric cannot but pleaſe, if they are natural, and adapted to the ſubject, whereas they'll be deſpiſed if they appear laboured and far-fetched. Beſides, this harmony which is formed by the relation of long and ſhort words, which was peculiar to the Greek and Roman languages, there is likewiſe another which may be applied to all languages in the world, and which is produced by ranging the different members of a period according to their lengths.

But perhaps there may be ſome men who are quite inſenſible to this ſort of muſic, and therefore deny that there is any ſuch ſenſation, becauſe

becauſe nature has refuſed it to themſelves. How ſhall we be able to undeceive them? Or how ſhall we to a blind man prove the beauty of colours? Nevertheleſs let us try what we can do, let us endeavour to demonſtrate that the periods in every language may acquire a harmony by the proper diſpoſition of their members.

Whatever is preſented to us, is capable of being made agreeable, when its parts are ſuſceptible of proportions eaſy to comprehend, and its ſtructure formed in ſuch a manner as may anſwer the end propoſed. This principle is inconteſtable, and proved to be ſo by the practice of all arts which are deſigned to pleaſe the mind. But the

members of a period are capable of receiving a proportion eaſy to be comprehended, becauſe they are ſeparated from each other at a ſenſible diſtance, and may be made ſhort or long at our pleaſure. In like manner they are ſuſceptible of a relation which may anſwer the end propoſed by them. The object aimed at by diſcourſe is to imprint itſelf on the memory; when the members of a period are equal, this fixes them in the mind, and keeps them linked together, and if they are unequal, the moſt advantageous way of ranging them will be to give the laſt places to the longeſt members, as being the moſt difficult to retain. Hence it is evident, that there may be a meaſured

proſe in all languages, becauſe there are none, where the periods are not capable of pleaſing the ear, either by the proportion of the members, or their harmonious progreſſion.

But here it may be ſaid, Muſt a writer then who is employed in the moſt important ſubjects, take a pair of ſcales in his hand, and weigh each word and member of a period? If he was to follow after ſuch trifling ornaments, would not this take away a good deal from the ſtrength of the thought, and the dignity of the ſentiment? A man can hardly help thinking ſo. However let us turn our eyes towards Cicero; tho' he ſeems to be Reaſon's interpreter, and makes her ſpeak with the greateſt

greateſt force and energy of expreſſion, yet in all his numerous works, there is hardly to be found one ſentence which does not ſeem to have all the harmony it was capable of receiving. Can we believe that this great man, who was ſo converſant with the ſublimeſt parts of philoſophy, and ſo much engaged in the weighty affairs of the ſtate, would employ any conſiderable part of his time and labour upon childiſh trifles? No certainly; but he was born with a genius and an exquiſite taſte, was a perfect maſter of his own language, underſtood all the principles of harmony, and always had a perfect knowledge of the ſubject which he undertook to handle. The periods

riods naturally preſented themſelves to him, as well as the moſt proper ideas, ſentiments, and expreſſions; and all thoſe who are born with the ſame talents, and have cultivated them with the ſame care, will reap the like advantages. If the ſtrict and unalterable numbers of poetry, are ſo far from being troubleſome to poets, that they rather aid and aſſiſt them, we may infer from thence, that the ſentiments and thoughts in proſe cannot but be elevated by a harmony that's more full of variety, and leſs tied up to the ſtrictneſs of laws.

This matter may be examined into much further than I have done *. For I have aimed at no-

* See the Abbé Batteux in his *Cours de Belles Lettres, Tome* 3.

thing

thing more than to trace out the firſt principles. But before I finiſh this inquiry, I ſhall endeavour to canvaſs an opinion of M. de la Motte. "There are ſome perſons, ſays he, who deny the orators the uſe of numbers, which they think belong only to poets. But what a whimſical conçeit is this, that the ſame things which are highly offenſive in proſe, ſhould yet pleaſe in poetry? Is it poſſible that the ear can have two contrary ſenſations from the ſame order of ſounds? Thus, theſe numbers cannot, in reality, be offenſive, and it is nothing but meer whim which pretends to exclude them from proſe."

Theſe

Theſe perſons whom M. de la Motte calls whimſical in their taſte, are found in all nations who have cultivated eloquence. And can we imagine that mankind in general would be ſo far influenced by caprice, that they ſhould, in oppoſition to nature, conſpire to form a diſagreeable ſenſation out of nothing? Inſtead of refuſing to acquieſce in this univerſal taſte, let us rather endeavour to trace out the cauſe of this certain fact.

Thoſe who have ſtudied the theory of muſic, have believed, that by the proportions which regulate the harmony of concord, the fourth ought to be more agreeable than it is; but they have pretended, that the relation which forms this

fourth,

fourth, is of ſuch of nature that it brings in the idea of the fifth, which comes ſo cloſe upon that of the fourth that it quite effaces, and makes it in ſome meaſure diſappear. May it not be nearly the ſame with a verſe, which is part of a period? May it not in ſome degree be harſh, becauſe it recals to the mind a harmony ſuperior to that of proſe? All the parts of the whole ought to have their peculiar beauties, and be diſpoſed in ſuch a manner that they may appear harmonious, and not be effaced by each other; a florid expreſſion will appear a deformity in a ſimple ſtyle, and the caſe appears to be the ſame, in reſpect to the ear, when a verſe makes part of a period.

But

But how comes it that verſes quoted in proſe produce ſo agreeable an effect? Becauſe they are detached parts, which are pronounced in a different manner, and to which we can expect nothing of the like harmony to ſucceed. If any one in a plain dreſs ſhould ſhow a rich ſtuff, this would not in the leaſt be offenſive to the ſight; on the contrary it would be very much ſo, if he was by way of variety, to add a piece of it to his coat. Beſides, ſuch a variety would appear the more deformed, becauſe it unites the moſt diſproportioned objects. However we muſt allow that the harmony of verſification is not ſo greatly ſuperior to that of periods, but frequently verſes are allowed to paſs in proſe, without being taken

for very conſiderable deformities; they are looked upon to be ſuch ſlight imperfections, that Iſocrates, Cicero, and the very beſt writers, choſe to let them remain, rather than ſacrifice a happy expreſſion.

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